OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SEVENTEEN

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DOCTRINES OF DEVILS

These "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils," so successful over the entire world in all past time, the Lord advises his people, will be specially active and specially seductive in form in the close or "harvest" of this Gospel age. "Now the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, (through) giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils speaking lies in hypocrisy." (1 Tim. 4:1.) We are also forewarned that this "hypocrisy" consists in personating *Messengers of light* ("angels of light"—2 Cor. 11:13.14.), and affecting to bring in "*New light.*"

Among the barbarians, steeped in ignorance, there is no need of new light—they are left asleep. But amongst the enlightened and civilized (despite his blinding influence, 2 Cor. 4:4), thought and investigation are being aroused; and there Satan is kept busy. Among such necromancy and incantations will not do; their intellects are too alert to be much or long hoodwinked by these. Even the finer deceptions of *spiritism* (with its manifestations of superhuman powers through rapping, tipping, writing and speaking and impersonating *mediums* with familiar spirits, which it claims are for the purpose of proving human immortality), are too gross and senseless to deceive and captivate God's consecrated ones, the very class Satan is most anxious to stumble, Consequently there are *changes in* progress,—new garments of "new light are assumed continually, and every feature of present truth sent by God to "the household of faith," as meat in due season, is promptly *counterfeited*, in order "to deceive if it were possible the very elect."

But it is not possible to deceive those whose faith in God is fixed in Christ—who are trusting in the merit of Christ's great redeeming sacrifice and whose hearts are wholly consecrated to the Lord's service. Such "shall never fall;" but all others are to be separated from the true, and God permits, yea, using Satan's wrath to work out his own plans, he may be and is said to *send* the strong delusions which are now perplexing all whose faith is not founded upon the rock Christ Jesus, and who have not already put on the whole armor of God, supplied in his Word. All who have failed to receive the truth *in the love of it*, but take pleasure in the error, God wills shall be deceived by these "Doctrines of devils," that thus their *condemnation*, as unfit for a share in the Kingdom, may be manifested.—See 2 Thess. 2:10, 11. —Z.'94-119.

COMFORTER VISITS

Brothers R. O. Hadley, A. A. Yerex, C. E. Heard and H. A. Livermore are now in the western states and Canada. Brother Palmer has been making a tour of the Pacific coast states. He is now on his way east, where he will visit classes throughout the central and northern states. Brother Campbell has arrived on the Pacific coast within the last few days and will visit the various classes before returning east. Brother Wisdom has been in Philadelphia, Pa., for some little time and will remain in the New England states for the present.

If we are inclined to marvel that the Jews rejected Jesus after seeing his mighty works, what might be said of us if for any reason we become doubters or unfaithful to Him who has so clearly spoken to us from Heaven, by whose stripes we have been healed and who have realized Him to be indeed the resurrection and the life? Whoever, therefore, has experienced this quickening to newness of life, this begetting of the Spirit, has come under so clear a demonstration of the divine power and goodness and wisdom and love operating through Jesus as to be without excuse "If they fall away."

Hence the Apostle tells us that it would be "impossible to renew them again unto repentance." (Heb. 6:6). He tells us that in their case such a falling away would be a wilful act, not one of ignorance or weakness, and that to thus fall away would imply the same attitude of heart which the Jews entertained toward our Lord when he was with them—that it would be virtually crucifying the Lord afresh and putting him to an open shame. Heb. 6:6.—Z. '06-111.

God is not unmindful of your labor of love; he is faithful and true to his promise. Those who are his will not be disturbed or discouraged by what others may say, but will be governed in their conclusions by the Lord's Word. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." It is not necessary for us to know just where our brother will be. It is sufficient if we are diligent to make our own calling and election sure. In the Lord's house there are some occupying positions of honor and some of less honor. God setteth the members in the body as it pleaseth him; and this setting applies both to their position while in the flesh and beyond the vail. If we do our best to fulfill our part of the covenant, he is faithful and just to fulfill his.—Z. '18.55.

Few are the faithful "Israelites indeed" who boldly stem the tide of opposition and declare themselves fully on the Lord's side by fearlessly discarding the traditions of men and daring to believe and teach the Word of God to the contrary. The many prefer the favor of men to the favor of God, and are quite willing to prove their disloyalty to God in order to obtain it. Rejecting the testimony of his Word, they blindly assent to the idols of human tradition and bow down to and serve them. But the devotion and zeal of the loyal and true are not unnoticed, and will not fail of their reward in due time, even though some such may yet be called upon to walk through the fiery furnace of affliction to prove their devotion to God in not bowing down with the majority.

"When through fiery trials, their pathway shall lie,
His grace all-sufficient shall be their supply.
The flames shall not hurt them—God only designs
Their dross to consume and their gold to refine."
—Z. '92-159.

We have no fear of the Adversary, because we know that the Lord will not permit the Adversary to injure us, if we keep close to Him. And if God permits us to have experiences of trial from the Adversary and our fellowmen, He does so to the intent that these may work out good to us.

"My God, I set my seal that Thou art true,
Of Thy good promise not one thing hath failed!"
—Z. '13-250.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL. Z. '18:51.

"IF GOD BE FOR US WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?"

Romans 8:31.

What wonderful thoughts these words arouse! God *for us!* God on *our side!* It means almighty wisdom enlisted in our interest, almighty power to be exerted on our behalf, almighty love and infinite goodness watching over us and caring for us and helping us. What immeasurable lengths and breadths, heights and depths of infinite grace are here so forcibly and so concisely set before the mind!

But we notice a limitation: The Apostle's suggestion is not that God is for every one, but for "*us*". To whom does he refer by this word "us?" Is it possible that divine love and energy, wisdom and power are not being exerted on behalf of the world, but only on behalf of the Church in this present time? . . . .

In the preceding verses (29, 30) the Apostle explains the character and methods of the divine selection of the elect Church, and we cannot do better than notice its details, because so much depends upon this point. If we can find in the Apostle's description good and sufficient evidence to assure us that we are of this elect Church, then we shall have great cause for thankfulness, confidence and joy, in realizing that God with all his mighty power and wisdom and love is enlisted on our behalf. A great difficulty with many seems to be, not that they doubt that there is such an election in progress, nor that they doubt that God is *for* some but that they doubt that they belong to that elect class—doubt, therefore, that they are of the "us", and that God is for them; and that he is causing all things to work together for good to them.

By reason of their natural constitution, some of the humble-minded of the Lord's people lack the confidence which they should have, while in some instances others who have such confidence have no real basis for it. Knowledge, therefore, clear knowledge of the Apostle's argument, is essential to proper faith respecting this subject, and proper confidence in God's care over those who have been adopted into his family and are seeking to make their calling and election sure. Our faith is made necessarily dependent to a large extent upon our understanding of the divine revelation on these subjects. Let us, therefore, critically examine the Apostle's statement with reference to the various steps in this election, and note our own connection with the same, step by step, that we may know to a certainty whether or not we are of the "us" class which he mentions, on behalf of whom the Lord's power and wisdom are and will be exerted.

The Apostle begins by asserting divine foreknowledge; a divine attribute which will not be questioned by any Christian. God not only foreknew the sin that would enter into the world through the liberty given to father Adam and mother Eve, but he also foresaw the fall that would take place as the result of his own sentence, and the mental, moral and physical degradation which have resulted. Moreover, he foreknew that in due time he would send his "Only Begotten Son," our Lord, to ransom all from sin and its penalty, so that ultimately he might be the Deliverer of all who desire to return to harmony with their Creator. He not only foreknew the humiliation of our Lord, his First Begotten Son, from his condition of glory and spiritual nature to the lower conditions of human nature, but he foreknew his trials, and his faithfulness through them, even unto death, even the death of the cross. In all this he foresaw our redemption sacrifice. He foresaw also the glory which he designed to bestow upon our Lord Jesus following his obedience, as expressed by the Apostle Paul, saying, "Him hath God highly exalted, and given him a name (title, honor, etc.,) above every name."

But our Heavenly Father foreknew and foreordained still more than all this—the selection of the Church to be the "Body" of Christ, the "Bride" of Christ, his associate, not only in the sufferings and trials of the present life, but also in the subsequent glory and great work of "blessing all the families of the earth." This is distinctly stated by the same Apostle in his letter to the Ephesians (1:4), where he declars that "God hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world." The same forordination is distinctly stated by the Apostle Peter, who writes to consecrated believers, addressing them, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the spirit," etc.—1 Pet. 1:2.

But the *predestination* of this verse (Rom. 8.29) is not at all what has generally been understood: it is not said that God predestinates that some should go to heaven and others to eternal torment. That is where false human reasoning has corrupted the testimony of God's Word and made it of no effect, or worse—of bad effect. The Apostle's statement is very clear, that God predestined that all who shall be of this elect, foreknown and foreordained Church in glory must first be "*conformed to the image of his Son*"; or as the literal reading would give it, "copies of his Son." How reasonable this predestination! How unreasonable the false view! God is calling a number of sons to "glory, honor and immortality," and has made Christ Jesus the Only Begotten, faithful in every trial, the Head or Captain of this foreordained company, whom he has since been calling, testing and preparing for the foreordained glory. And as it was but a reasonable thing that God should determine that if our Lord Jesus would be faithful he should receive the highest exaltation, so it was equally right and proper that the divine will should be forcibly asserted and that he should predestinate that none could be of that glorified "Body of Christ," except as they would become imitators of Jesus, who is the firstborn among these his "brethren."

Having thus stated the matter concisely, the Apostle proceeds to apply it to the Church individually, and to show the steps which God is taking during this Gospel Age for the purpose of finding amongst men this class which he has foreordained shall be found. The Apostle gives the particulars in the following verse (30); and although it is simply stated it has very generally been stumbled over, not only by believers in general, but also by theologians, because of two things. (1) The last word of this verse translated "glorified" should be translated "honored"; and should be understood to refer to the honor conferred upon all who, during this age, are brought to any knowledge of Christ—the true light This *honor* went first to the Jews, and selected a "remnant"; but when that nation proved unworthy of this *honor* it was turned to the Gentiles, to gather out of them a peculiar people, a holy nation, to bear the name of Christ, (Acts 15:14.) (2) The reader naturally expects the Apostle to begin with present conditions and trace them up to the grand result—*the glorified Church*—while on the contrary the Apostle very properly begins at the other end, and traces the results downward. He does not begin, as is generally supposed, by saying: God honored you with the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, and when you believed he justified you, and after you were justified he called you, and if you are faithful to your calling he will by and by exalt you to the condition which he foreknew. Indeed, it would not be possible to staate the matter truthfully from that side, because many are honored with a knowledge of the Gospel of Christ who are never justified (because they do not accept the knowledge, do not accept Christ), and of those who do accept Christ and who are thus justified, it would not be true to say that they will all be sanctified; nor would it be correct to say that all who once are sanctified will reach the condition of glory; for "many are called but few chosen"; *few* "make their calling and election sure."

But the Apostle argues the matter from the only proper and logical standpoint having stated that God has foreknown or fore-intended the election of the Church, he steps forward to the time when God's purpose and intention will have been completed, accomplished—the time when the election will be finished and the Church accepted to glory. From that future standpoint he indicates the various steps *which led up to it*, saying, all those of the foreknown ones, glorified, will previously have been called; because it is a matter of grace, and no man taketh this honor unto himself, but "he that is called of God"—as the "Head of the Body", so each member of the Body. And, says the Apostle, every one thus "called" will previously have been "justified"; because God calls no enemies, no unreconciled sinners, to this high position. It was for this reason that Christ died, that through faith in his blood repentant believers might be "*justified*" and might be thus *prepared* to be "called." It is thus evident that the high calling to this glorious position of joint-heirship with Christ is a very different thing, indeed, from the calling of sinners to repentance. Sinners are called to repentance anywhere and everywhere and at any time. And when they repent, the Lord engages that in due time he will point them to

"The fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
Where sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

When they have lost their guilty stains, through repentance and faith in the Redeemer, they reach the condition of *justification*, and are ready to be "called" to sonship and joint-heirship. But the Apostle is still going backward in the argument and, having told that the foreordained class would all be "called", and that they would all previously have been "justified", he declares that the justified ones would all previously have been favored or "honored" (not glorified): honored or favored with a *knowledge of the truth,* a knowledge of the Gospel . . .

Having followed the Apostle's reasoning, we are enabled to see clearly each step of divine providence taken in connection with the divine purpose and foreordinataion.

(1) We see that first of all, to a certain extent, God was "*for*" us, *for* the people of Europe and North America: he was for them or *favorable* to them to the extent of "honoring" or favoring them with the light of grace "as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, our Lord."

(2) In a still fuller sense God was "*for*" or favorable towards those who accept the light of truth, those who through repentance and faith in the precious blood, are justified" from sin through his grace.

(3) He was yet more "*for*" these justified ones, to the extent that he "called' them to suffer with Christ during this Gospel age, and by and by to share his glory.

(4) In a still fuller sense he is "*for*" all those who accept the call and who are seeking to "make their calling and election sure." *God is in an especial sense "for" all these who are so RUNNING AS TO OBTAIN THE PRIZE which he offers.* "They shall be *mine,* in that day when I make up *my jewels.*"

It is to this called and faithfully running class that the Apostle speaks as "us". He and those whom he addressed ("called to be saints"—Rom. 1:6, 7) had first been "honored" with the light; second, they, by repentance and faith, had accepted it and been justified; third, they had been "called"; fourth, they had accepted the calling and given themselves *wholly* to the Lord. And with the Apostle and the early Church all who today can recognize themselves in this same position, as having taken these same steps, may properly apply to themselves the Apostle's words and say: *God is for us; who can be against us!*

All the "saints" throughout the whole world, who have taken the afore-mentioned steps, are probably altogether not a great multitude; but rather, comparatively, a "*little flock*"; yet each one of these may say to himself, and realize to the very bottom of his heart as applicable to himself, these wonderful words—*God is FOR us.* He may endeavor to grasp the significance of these words, but he will surely fail to get all of their wonderful meaning. *It is not possible for the human mind to grasp the riches of divine grace and love* *and power.* We cannot comprehend them, we can merely apprehend them. If God be *for us*, with all of his infinite wisdom and power, it implies also that Christ is for us, for he is one with the Father; it implies also that all the angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the heavenly powers of our knowledge and beyond our knowledge are *for us*—all enlisted upon our side, to do us good, to help us, to succor us in time of need, to uphold us in time of temptation, to strengthen us to do the Father's will. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

The view granted to Elisha's servant, of countless horses, chariots, and horsemen of fire or like fire, was of course merely a *vision*, nevertheless it represented a truth—that divine power is around about God's people on every hand for their protection and their deliverance. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that are his and delivereth them." "Are they (the angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.) Our Lord expressed the same thing, saying of his "faithful followers": "Their angels (messengers) do always behold the face of my Father." It matters not whether we shall understand this to signify that spirit beings continually surround those called to be the "elect" of the Lord, to guide and shape their interests for their highest good, or whether we shall understand it to be merely a figure of speech, signifying that divine power surrounds God's people; for the results would be the same; it matters not by which means the Lord would deliver them from the evil and help them in trial and adversity. The fact that God is *"for us"*, and that he is making all things work together for good to those who love him, is the central thought, the essence, the strength of this message to "us."

How wonderful is all this! Let us cast our minds for a moment over the world with its fifteen hundred millions of inhabitants. Let us remember that they are all under the "curse", under the sentence of divine displeasure, except the few who have heard of the redemption—of the Way, the Truth, and the Life— and who have by faith and obedience "escaped the condemnation that is on the world" and come back into harmony with the Father and into fellowship with his Son. Let us imagine, if we can, this "little flock" of the "honored", "justified" and "called", heaven-led and heaven-blessed, scattered here and there amongst the fifteen hundred million fellow-creatures. Oh, what joy, what comfort, what peace, what strength the thought must bring to each one who can realize that he has taken all of these steps thus far, and that he is still pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling!" This joy is not dimmed, but is greatly enhanced, by the thought that soon, in conformity with God's gracious foreordination all the "elect" may have a share in the great work of blessing with the knowledge of the True Light the masses who are yet in darkness, "without Good and having no hope" in him. For although a redemption has been provided for all, the knowledge of God's grace has not yet reached any but the favored or "honored" minority.

As the Apostle declares in this very same chapter (Rom. 8:22) it is indeed a groaning creation; it has been groaning ever since the sentence of divine wrath was expressed in Eden, and it must continue to groan until the great Deliverer shall have established his Kingdom, and shall have rolled back the "curse" of death and depravity. Oh, what riches of grace have come to *"us"* through Jesus Christ, our Lord! And yet, as the Apostle says, although we have all this blessing and favor, we have also with it certain trials, difficulties and painful experiences, which the Father sees necessary for our development in order that we may come up to the terms of his predestination, "copies of his Son." And in consequence of this, as the Apostle declares, "We ourselves also (as well as the whole creation) groan within ourselves (while suffering *with* the world we suppress the groan, "We lay our burdens at his feet and bear a song away") waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our Body"—" the Body of Christ," the elect Church.

The word *if* in this text does not signify a doubt or question on the subject; but quite the reverse. The Apostle has given the evidence That God is for *"us"*, in the preceding verses, and now uses *if* as though he said, If I have proved that God is for us, then who can be against us!

"WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?"

Who can be against us, if God is for us? The Apostle does not mean that, having God on our side, none would dare oppose our way. Quite to the contrary, we have bitter enemies and relentless foes. Who are against us? Their name is legion. The devil is against us; as the Apostle declares, "Your Adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." The Apostle Paul assures us that we must contend against "the wiles of the devil." St. James declares that we must "resist the devil." The Apostle informs us that Satan is cunning and deceitful, as well as desperately wicked; and says that therefore we must have a battle, and as good soldiers we must have on the armor of God and use it faithfully. Thus we are to resist the devil, and he will flee from us. We are to "quench all the fiery darts of the Adversary" in open attacks, and yet to remember that we battle not with flesh and blood, but with a demon host; with "principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places."—Eph. 6:12.

Nor is this all: We have a great enemy in ourselves, the "carnal mind," "the old man," *reckoned* dead, which must be kept in subjection. Perhaps the greatest battles and the greatest trials which we are called upon as "new creatures" to endure, are these battles of the new self, the mind of Christ, against the old fallen self, the mind of the flesh.

Furthermore: we have the "world" as "children of darkness" arrayed in opposition to us. They love the darkness and consequently hate not only the light, but also the "children of the light." This our Master declared, saying, "Ye are not of the world, for I have chosen you out of the world." "Marvel not if the world hate you; you know it hated me before it hated you." "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but now ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And the world's hatred is not conducted along honorable lines of warfare. It would be ashamed to declare that it loved darkness, and ashamed to declare that it hated us because of the light. Its policy, rather, guided by the great Adversary, is to "put light for darkness and darkness for light"; to misrepresent our best efforts as evil and selfish, and to misrepresent its own selfish efforts as honorable and good. "Marvel not, if the world hate you." "The darkness hateth the light."

Nor are these great adversaries the only ones to oppose us: we must expect to endure from still another quarter. As our Lord declared, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." Those whom you have dearly loved of your own family circle, and with whom you have had Christian fellowship, may turn against you and hate you for the truth's sake. Nor will this always be because of wickedness of intentions; sometimes, at least, the persecutions will come conscientiously; as for instance, Saul of Tarsus, who afterward became the great Apostle Paul, was once a persecutor of "this way," and ignorantly did many things against Jesus and those who loved him. He himself tells us that he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly, thinking that he did God service. And so doubtless it has been with much of the persecution that has come to the Lord's faithful ones in every age. Much of it has been inflicted conscientiously. It is quite remarkable, too, how the Adversary succeeds sometimes in deceiving those who once knew better into thinking that anger, malice, hatred, strife, bitter words and slander, "works of the flesh and the devil," are "*duty*". Alas, how blinding is the spirit of the Adversary!

All these adversaries must be resisted unto blood, unto death, if need be; must not be permitted to hinder our walking in the footsteps of Him who set us an example; must not be permitted to prevent us from becoming copies of our Lord and thus making our calling and election sure. But while resisting them with all our hight, we must avoid carnal weapons and not render railing for railing; rather, so far as possible, we should use the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and, Michael-like, say: "The Lord rebuke thee." God is "*for us*," and declares that in his due time he will right present wrongs and falsehoods, saying, "Vengeance is mine, I will render recompenses." Indeed, toward the class who war against us ignorantly and conscientiously we should feel no bitterness, but rather sympathy, love and an earnest desire and effort for an opening of the eyes of their understanding.

The Apostle was not ignoring all of these great adversaries which, like "roaring lions," would terrify us, and if possible arrest our progress in the path of consecration and sacrifice which leads on to glory. This is not his thought when he says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Quite to the contrary, his thought is, that *notwithstanding* all these things, which are against us, we may realize that God is *for us*, that he has predestinated a Church in glory and has justified and called us to be members of it, and brought us on the journey thus far, through all of these various steps. And if we can realize that God has thus been leading us up to the present time, to bring us to share his glory, and that all things thus far have been working for our good, this is our assurance that *all* wisdom, power and love shall be exerted in our behalf down to the very end of the race course, if we continue to abide in Christ faithfully.

What shall we fear? What could oppose our way so as to hinder it, if God be on our side? This reminds us of the adage, "God with one is a majority." So, God with us, and for us, and leading us, makes us mighty indeed, stronger than all these adversaries with all their arts and wiles and perversity, and able through his grace to came off conquerors, yea, more than conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood. . . . .

We are not now discussing what will be the fate of those who fail to be victors and to gain a crown and to sit with Christ on his throne; we are considering, rather, the *privileges* of those who have been "honored" of the Lord and led step by step up to present attainments of knowledge and privilege. We are seeking to bring before our minds at least a faint conception of the wonderful provisions of divine grace, and the full ability of every one so called to make his calling and election sure by laying hold of this grace of God, provided in Christ, by which, to them, all things shall work together for good, because they love God and are the called ones according to his purpose.—Z.'08-227-231.

FAILURES AS "STEPPING STONES"

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."—*James* 1:2.

He who escapes all trials and temptations and difficulties has every reason to doubt that he is really in relationship to God as a son. If he were a son, the Lord would surely find it necessary to give him trials and difficulties. If he does not have these he should go to the Father and make sure that there is no impediment on his part—make sure that he has put himself in the proper place where he can be prepared for the Kingdom. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."—Hebrews 12:6.

All will rejoice when the testings are over and we are accepted as overcomers, to share with the Lord in His throne. But patience, trust and love must first do a refining work in our hearts, making us mellow, submissive and obedient to God. Let the good work go on! Let us rejoice if our trials have made us stronger in character, more humble and Christlike, more aware of our blemishes and imperfections, more watchful and earnest in our endeavors to correct them so far as possible.

Even the conflicts in which we have had only partial victory may have resulted in blessings to us. Even in those experiences where we have suffered absolute failure, there may be, through the humiliation and the pain of defeat, a strengthening of our character, a firm determination for greater watchfulness in that direction and a more fervent prayer for the Lord's sustaining grace, the need of which has been more deeply impressed upon our hearts. Thus even failures may become "Stepping stones" by which we rise toward God and Heaven. Only through much tribulation shall we enter the Kingdom of Heaven at all. If, therefore, the Lord's people find themselves involved in temptations, tribulations, instead of feeling downcast they are to rejoice and say, These are evidences that the Lord is preparing me for a place in the Kingdom. This should give one courage to fight the good fight against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. The flesh is suffering; but the New Mind, the new will, has this joy; and the New Creature can rejoice, knowing that these trials are not for his harm, but for his good.—1 Pet. 4:13.

A WAY OF ESCAPE PROVIDED

The Heavenly Father will with every temptation provide a way of escape. Hence when we find ourselves in difficulty we are to say, The Heavenly Father is permitting this trial—the Lord Jesus will help me, and so I will rejoice in the fact that the Lord will not allow me to be overthrown; for He has promised that all things shall work out for my good.

As our text expressly says: We are to count it all joy when we *fall* into temptations—not when we *walk* into them. We are not to seek temptation. In our own fallen condition and that of those around us, with the Adversary alert to harm us, we know that there will be plenty of temptations without our walking into them. But if we fall into temptation we are to say, I have been striving against this thing, but the Lord has permited it; and there must, therefore, come some blessing out of it for me. Even temptations that come through negligence are not to be disesteemed. Some of our greatest lessons in *carefulness* have resulted from the effect of our own *carelessness*.

Our joy is largely dependent upon our study of the Word and our knowledge of the precious promises contained therein for those who overcome. The Lord wants those who will endure a great fight of afflictions, who will endure patiently though the temptations continue long and the tribulations become more and more severe. But if they should lose faith, all their previous good resolutions and standing for what is right would not make them overcomers.

These trials are intended to develop in us patience—that this quality may be DEEPLY ingrained. *We are building character for all eternity;* and patience could not be thus developed and maintained except by repeated difficulties, tests—by our resolving again and again to be stronger and firmer in building the character-likeness of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

A WORD OF WARNING

To those who are of this anointed company and who are striving to attain the glory promised to the faithful followers of Christ, the Apostle Peter issues a word of warning. In the first chapter of his second Epistle, he urges the Church to add quality after quality of character—preparation, that thus they may be fitted for the glorious things that God has promised to the faithful. He specifies *faith* as the primary qualification. To this he says that we are to add fortitude, knowledge, patience, self-control, godliness, brotherly kindness and a generous love for all mankind. The reason why the Scriptures declare that our judgment will be according to our *faith* is that while in the flesh we shall never be able to perform *works* such as God could approve.

What God approves is the New Creature. By exercising faith and by demonstrating loyalty these New Creatures will be able to please Him, and to work out the proper character as enjoined in His Word, developing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. *"If ye do these things,"* says the Apostle, "Ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Faith is necessary *all along the line.* Without faith we could not have the courage to go on. If we did not have faith what would be our source of encouragement? The fall mentioned in the text above quoted (2 Peter 1:10), is evidently a fall from the position to which we have been invited and to which invitation we respond. We were called to be joint-heirs with our Lord. If we are obedient to the Word of the Lord and are properly exercised by the experiences which are given us in the School of Christ, we shall gain His approval; for "Faithful is He that hath called us." *If there is a fall in our case, it will be due to failure to do our part.* If we fail to cultivate character, we shall fail to gain the Kingdom.

CAUSES INDUCING A FALL

Among those who fall some will fall more seriously than others. Those who fail to go on will receive certain tests which will determine whether they will turn back to the world or will continue in the *narrow way.* Some will fail in that they will not manifest sufficient zeal. These will come through great tribulations. If by these experiences they are brought to a full loyalty to the Lord, they will be granted everlasting life, but not on so high a plane as if they had not failed in their manifestation of zeal for the Lord, and of faith, energy and perseverance in doing the Lord's will.

Again, from lack of zeal in the Lord's service or from cultivating a spirit of bitterness, one may deteriorate until he becomes an enemy of the Lord, loving sin rather than righteousness. As an opponent of God such a one would suffer a complete fall. But those who have a temporary fall, but who afterwards overcome in the trials which the Lord will allow to come upon them, thus showing their loyalty to Him, will be fully recovered. *Those who fall utterly can never be recovered.* ..Such will lose *everything.* They had sacrificed their *human* hopes before they could be accepted at first; therefore their falling away from this condition of a New Creature will be a hopeless fall. . . . . .

Dear brethren, let us take heed to our ways, that we may indeed be presented *faultless* before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."—Z.- '14-149-150.

TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the Faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."—Collossians 2:6,7.

The context from which our text is taken seems to show that the Apostle is contrasting with the Gospel hope the various hopes which might go to establish one in some kind of faith, some kind of belief, some kind of course in life. But he is addressing those especially who have already accepted Jesus Christ as God's Representative—those who believe that God has sent His Son into the world to be the Redeemer of the race of Adam, and by and by to be the Deliverer of mankind from the power of sin and death. All those who are in Christ Jesus have received Him with this understanding. This is the only Message which God has sent; this is "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

DIVINE VS. HUMAN MESSAGE

The Apostle Paul urged those to whom he wrote to continue in this faith, and not to try to combine earthly philosophy with this Heavenly Message. As they had received Christ as God's Appointed and their Sufficiency in all things —the One "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Deity bodily"—so they were to walk. As they had recognized Him as the Heavenly Teacher, so they were to continue to make progress in the same way—the path that leads to glory, honor and immortality. They were not to think for one moment that any human teaching could be mixed with the Divine Message; for any other doctrine would serve only to confuse the Heavenly Message in the minds of the hearers.

This would not mean, however, that the teachings of the Apostles were to be ignored, for the Master especially informed the Church that His Twelve Apostles would be His mouthpieces. It would, however, guard us against any supposition that there would be any other teaching or any other Church to take the place of Jesus and His Apostles. To these He declared that whatsoever things they would bind on earth would be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever things they would loose on earth would be loosed in Heaven.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPIRITUAL PLANT

Having stated the matter in this way, the Apostle then uses a forceful illustration to show how we are to progress in Christ. Turning from the figure of a man walking in Christ as a member of His Body, St. Paul gives us the picture of a tree, the root of which goes downward and the trunk of which reaches upward, to obtain the nourishment which will give it strength and stability. As the roots of a tree push themselves downward and imbibe the nutriment of the soil, while at the same time the trunk and the branches reach up into the atmosphere to obtain through the leaves the necessary elements of growth, so the mentality of the Christian takes hold of the great and precious promises of the Word of God, while at the same time he is building character through his heart appreciation of these promises, in connection with the experiences of life. The roots of faith push down deep into the knowledge of the Divine Plan, while the tree of character grows higher and higher, developing and maturing the rich fruits of the Holy Spirit of God; for instruction is a form of *construction.*

While the Christian is thus growing up in character-likeness to our Redeemer, and his roots of faith are reaching deep down into the deep things of the Word of God, he is becoming established, settled. A tree that is well rooted in the earth, and requires years to die out. So it is with the Christian whose faith has been properly established; he should be so fixed, so established in the promises of God's word, that no wind of doctrine could overturn his faith.

Whoever is continually looking around for something *new (new light) is thus demonstrating the fact that he is not established in the Faith.* Having once made sure that the Divine Plan is the Plan of God, we should not permit ourselves to be moved away from that position. No Christian growth will be developed, no spiritual life retained unless the soul becomes fixed and settled in the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

ONE CAUSE OF SPIRITUAL DECAY

When once we have seen the Plan of God as revealed in Jesus, and have given ourselves to God and the study of His word, the only way to retain our spiritual life is to continue in this doctrine, to root ourselves in this soil and remain there. We are not to seek other fields with the thought that we can receive additional nourishment there, and that an admixture of other elements with what we have will be advantageous. No theories will mix with the Lord's plan. It is *complete;* it needs no assistance from other systems of belief. Any attempt to incorporate with it theories and ideas of men will only destroy its value. We can never become rooted and built up in Christ by such a course; our spiritual decay, and finally our spiritual death, would be the result, for one who has once thoroughly proven what is the Truth in Christ to go hunting around for new pastures in which to feed, there is no excuse. Either he has never been established in Christ, or else he has fallen into a spiritual decline. There is an exhaustless field for thought and for mental and spiritual activity in the plan of God in all its varied features.

We believe that God purposed to have a seed of Abraham through whom a blessing would come to all the families of the earth. Those who look for the fulfilment of this promise realize that Christ is the seed of Abraham and that His work is to fulfill this promise. For this purpose He came into the world. Later on, the Church learned that not only Christ Jesus, but also the Church, His Body, are sharing in the same faith, the same promise made to Abraham. Each individual called has the opportunity of coming in, of exercising his faith, and of being built up as a member of the Body of Christ. By this time (1914) the Body of Christ must be nearly complete. The hour is at hand when this glorious seed of Abraham is to take hold of the affairs of earth and bring in "The Restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the Holy Prophets since the world began." —Acts, 3:19-21.

As a tree does not breathe the same element at all times, and as it is not always flooded with sunshine, but needs also the rains and storms for its development, so the Child of God needs varied experiences and sometimes change of environment to best develop all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The great Husbandman knows just what experiences and surroundings each one of his "trees" needs—how much sunshine, how much rain, how much cold and how much heat, how much pruning—and He will supply just what is best adapted to each case. He knows how to vary these conditions, environments, etc., without disturbing the process of rooting and upbuilding, but developing it. This we do not know how to accomplish, but would bring upon ourselves spiritual disaster. So we need to keep ourselves continually under the care of the skilful Husbandman and earnestly cooperate with Him, that we may grow and become strong and ***immovable—firmly established (stand fast).***

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

If we are to be the judges of the world in the next age, how shall we be fitted for this position, if we do not learn now how to take the proper viewpoint, the Lord's viewpoint, in our estimates of our brethren? If our love and our esteem for them is gaged by trifles, yea by matters even unworthy of notice in the eyes of the Lord, are we developing the qualities of character which will fit us to be the judges of the incoming age? How are we growing up into Christ in all things? Let us judge ourselves rigidly along these lines, that we may indeed become like the Master and win His final approval.

The Apostle urges that we become established in the faith. This term refers to "the faith which was once delivered to the saints"—the one Faith. This is to hold *at all costs.* Satan will attempt to divert our minds into other channels, to draw our attention to some new thing ***(new light or new work).*** But the Plan of God, the Truth of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord, is but one. It is given us for our instruction in righteousness, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3:17.) It is not the Truth of geometry or trigonometry or geology or astronomy or any other science that we are to be diligent to study and be grounded and built up in, but God's Word. (John 17:17.) These other truths are very well in their way, but we have little time to study these now. We shall have all eternity in which to learn all the wonders of creation, but now we are to apply ourselves especially to the mastery of spiritual Truth, the deep things of the mystery of God, revealed to His Saints for a specific purpose.

AN ESTABLISHED CHRISTIAN NOT A BIGOT

The Truth embraces all the Scriptural teachings relative to Christ and His work, to our relationship to Him as members of His Body, and to the Brethren as fellow-members. We are to abide therein with thanksgiving. We should familiarize ourselves with the different features of this Truth more and more. We should be clear in regard to what our Lord taught and why He taught it, and should know how to connect the different parts of the Truth into a harmonious whole. We are to be ***thoroughly*** furnished. We are heartily to appreciate the loving kindness of our God in revealing to us these glorious things, and to realize that we did not originate them ourselves, nor was any man the originator of them, but the Lord Himself. They are the gift of God to us, and we are to be most thankful for this great gift, to guard it jealously as a priceless treasure, and to let our light shine to the glory of God's name.

The general sentiment among the teachers of false doctrine, and even among the world in general, who do not believe in the necessity or the advisibility in faith, is that to be established is to be bigoted. Those who are so unfair in mind as to receive and tenaciously hold what they have never proven, either by sound logic or by the authority of the Word of God, are rightly called bigots. But one who in simple, childlike faith accepts and firmly holds to what God has inspired, what He has caused to be written in His Word for our instruction, it not a bigot, ***but a strong established character, and will stand*** when all the structures built upon the numerous theories and imaginings of men shall have fallen. The great Day now upon us is trying every man's character-structure, of what sort it is, and but ***very few, even among professed Christians, will stand the test.***

The few who will pass safely through this crucial trial without loss are those only who have become established in the Truth of God, "rooted and grounded" and built up into Christ." The difference between a strong and steadfast Christian and a bigot is that one is established in Truth, and the other is established in error. The "fire" of this Day will continue to burn and to manifest the great difference between the two classes, until all have been tested and tried and found worthy or unworthy.

IMPORTANCE OF SELF-SCRUTINY

The Apostle's words in our text lead each child of God back to the time when he first made his own consecration. Under what conditions did we come into Christ? We recall that it required much humility on our part to acknowledge that we were sinners, utterly unable to save ourselves. Some seem to forget the way in which they started. They started with faith and humility and meekness, and with the desire to be truly built up into the Master's likeness. But they seem by degrees to lose sight of this, and begin to grow in another direction than straight upward into the fulness of Christ. They like to make some show before the world. *They come to neglect the first principles of Christian development,* while still talking about the doctrines, or making up doctrines of their own.

Thus gradually these get away from the doctrines and the Spirit of Christ. The Apostles put us on guard against these dangers: Are you sure that you ever really received Christ? Are you sure that you ever actually made a full consecration to God and became a new creature? You should know this. If you did, then make sure that you are progressing in His likeness. Without careful scrutiny you might think you are progressing when you are not. The Narrow Way remains narrow unto the end of the journey; a mere profession of faith and a certain round of observances are not sufficient. Remember that we are to confess the Lord by our looks, by our manner, by all the act and words of life.

Only by continual scrutiny of ourselves in the light of God's Word can we make real progress in the narrow way in which our Master walked. Truth is to become brighter and fuller and more luminous as we go onward. To this end, we must keep close to the Word and in line with His program. *The Lord will not accept little, undeveloped sprouts for the Kingdom,* but He wants those that have grown and matured—strong, sturdy "trees of righteousness."—Isaiah 61:3.

GOD'S WORD ALONE WILL UPBUILD

Delve into the promises of God more and more. As you do this, the roots of faith will draw up the nutriment and send it out into your life, and you will grow, just as a tree grows, because nourished, fed. Then alone will you become established in *The Faith,* and not in your imaginings nor the imaginings of others. Our faith is to grow stronger and more vigorous day by day. It is not to be a faith in ourselves or in anything apart from the Lord. Faith is what we started with in the beginning, and we shall need it in increasing measure as we go on in our upward way—faith in God and in His sure Word. All that we know as children of the Lord has come to us through the channel of Jesus, His holy Apostles. and the Prophets of old, and we are to continue feeding at this same table with thanksgiving . . . Following thus in the Lord's way, we find the only true joy, and can make the only true progress. "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:10,11.—Z.'14-311-314.

THE RELATIVE CLAIMS OF LOVE AND JUSTICE

There is nothing more necessary to the peace and prosperity of the Church of God than that its members should have a clear understanding and appreciation of moral principles, with a full determination to be controlled by them. Even among Christians there are often differences of opinion, with reference to principles of action, which greatly interfere with spiritual growth and prosperity. Such difficulties most frequently arise through a failure to rightly distinguish between the relative claims of love and justice. Therefore we deem it profitable to briefly consider these principles and their operation among the children of God.

Justice is sometimes represented by a pair of evenly poised balances, and sometimes by the square and compass, both of which are fitting emblems of its character. Justice knows no compromise and no deviation from its fixed rule of action. It is mathematically precise. It gives nothing over for "good weight" or "good measure": there is no grace in it, no heart, no love, no sympathy, no favor of any kind. It is the cold, calculating, exact measure of truth and righteousness. When Justice is done, there is no thanks due to the one who metes it out: such a one has only done a *duty,* the neglect of which would have been culpable, and the doing of which merits no favor or praise. And yet, cold, firm and relentless as this principle is, it is declared to be the very foundation of God's throne. It is the principle which underlies all his dealings with all his creatures: It is his *unchangeable business principle.* And how firmly he adheres to it is manifest to everyone acquainted with the plan of salvation, the first step of which was to satisfy the claims of justice against our race. Though it cost the life of his only begotten and well beloved Son to do this, so important was this principle that he freely gave him up for us all— to satisfy its legal claims against us.

The principle of love, unlike that of justice, overflows with tenderness and longs to bless. It is full of grace, and delights in the bestowment of favor. It is manifest, however, that no action can be regarded as a favor or a manifestation of love, which has not underneath it the substantial foundation of justice. Thus, for instance, if one comes to you with a gift, and at the same time disregards a just debt to you, the gift falls far short of appreciation as an expression of love; and you say, We should be just before we attempt to be generous.

And this is right: if justice is the foundation principle in all of God's dealings, it should be in ours also; and none the less so among brethren in Christ than among those of the world. As brethren in Christ, we have no right to presume upon the favor of one another. All that we have a right *to claim* from one another is simple justice—justice in the payment of our honest debts to each other, justice in our judgment one of another (which must make due allowance for frailties, etc., because we realize in ourselves some measure of similar imperfection), and justice in fair and friendly treatment one of another. This is all we have any right to *claim;* and we must also bear in mind that while we have a right to claim this for ourselves from others, we are just as fully obligated to render the same to them.

But while we *may claim* justice—though there is no obligation to demand it for ourselves, and we may if we choose even suffer injustice uncomplainingly—we *must,* if we are Christ's, *render* it. In other words, we are not responsible for the actions of others in these respects, but we are responsible for our own. *And therefore we must see to it that all our actions are squared by the exact rule of justice, before we ever present a single act as an expression of love.*

The principle of love is not an exact principle to be measured and weighed like that of justice. It is three-fold in its character, being pitiful, sympathetic or reverential, according to the object upon which it is centered. The love of pity is the lowest form of love: it takes cognizance of even the vile and degraded, and is active in measures of relief. The love of sympathy rises higher, and proffers fellowship. But the love of reverence rises above all these, and delights in the contemplation of the good, the pure and the beautiful. In this latter sense we may indeed love God supremely, as the personification of all that is truly worthy of admiration and reverence, and our fellow men in proportion as they bear his likeness.

Although we owe to every man the duty of love in some one of these senses, we may not demand it one of another, as we may the principle of justice, for love is the overflow of justice; Justice fills the measure full, but love shakes it, presses it down, heaps it up and overflows justice. It is therefore something not to be demanded, nor its lack to be complained of, but to be gratefully appreciated as a favor and to be generously reciprocated. Every one who craves it at all should crave it in its highest sense—the sense of admiration and reverence. *But this sort of love is the most costly, and the only way to secure it is to manifest that nobility of character which calls it forth from others who are truly noble.*

The love of sympathy and fellowship is also very precious; but if it come merely in response to a demand, it comes robbed of its choicest aroma: therefor never demand it, but rather by manifestation of it toward others court its reciprocation.

The love of pity is not called out by the nobility of the subject, but rather by the nobility of the bestower, who is so full of the principle of love that it overflows in its generous impulses toward even the unworthy. All of the objects of pity are not, however, unworthy of love in the highest sense: and some such often draw upon our love in all the senses.

To demand love's overflow of blessing—which is beyond the claims of justice—is only an exhibition of covetousness. We may act on this principle of love ourselves, but we may not claim it from others. The reverse of this exhibits a manifest lack of love and a considerable measure of selfishness.

Thus, for instance, two of the Lord's children were once rooming together and, through a failure to rightly consider the relative claims of love and justice, one presumed upon the brotherly love of the other to the extent of expecting him to pay the entire rent; and when the other urged the claims of justice, he pushed the claim of brotherly love, and the former reluctantly yielded to it, not knowing how to refute the claim, yet feeling that somehow some Christians had less principle than many worldly people. How strange that any of God's children should take so one-sided a view. Cannot all see that love and justice should work both ways and that it is the business of each not to oversee others in these respects, but to look well to his own course, and, if he would teach others, let it be rather by example than by precept.

Let us beware of a disposition to covetousness, and let each remember that he is steward over his own goods, and not over his neighbor's, and that each is accountable to the Lord, and not to his brother, for the right use of that which the Master entrusted to him. There is nothing much more unlovely and unbecoming to the children of God than a disposition to petty criticism of the individual affairs of one another. *It is a business too small for the saints,* and manifests a sad lack of that brotherly love which should be specially manifest in generous consideration, which would rather cover a multitude of sins that magnify one.

May love and justice find their proper and relative places in the hearts of all of God's people, so that the enemy may have no occasion to glory. The Psalmist says, "Oh, how love I the law (the law of love, whose foundataion is justice:) it is my meditation all the day." (Psa. 119:97.) Surely, if it were the constant meditation of all, there would be fewer and less mistakes than we often see. Let us watch and be sober, that the enemy may not gain an advantage over us.—Z.'93-163-165.

THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST MAKES FREE

Liberty is a grand word, yet it does not always spell true blessing and happiness. In the Second Psalm we read of some who say, "Let us break their bands asunder"—let us be free. In Genesis we read of how Satan broke loose from the restraining hand of righteousness and made shipwreck of his eternal interests. We learn also of how he seduced Mother Eve and she persuaded Adam to break loose from the Divine restraints to eat of the forbidden fruit. The entire history of the Jewish nation is a narrative of rebellions against Divine regulations—temporary feelings of release and liberty and subsequent experiences of sorrow and repentance. Judas cut loose from bondage to his Master and the Divine providences represented in him. The thirty pieces of silver, the wage of his treachery, brought joy to his craven heart for but a little time. At last it ate as doth a canker and he wished it back and himself rid of the liberty into which he sold himself. St. Peter was unwillingly entrapped into denying his Master and asserting his liberty with oaths. But his loyal heart could find no rest in such liberty.

Should it surprise us that the Adversary still holds up the bait of liberty and leads the world into all kinds of excesses in the name of liberty? Should it surprise us that amongst God's people, too, he uses the same tactics—telling them that they are enslaved when they are obedient to the voice of God's Word and to the leadings of his providence? Is it surprising that he urges them to break the bands of the consecration and reassert their freedom? It is not strange Nor is it peculiar that some, in leaving the Truth, are beginning a warfare against it—betraying it, seeking to injure it, etc. When such boast of their newfound liberty, we ask them, *What liberty have you?*.. The only answer can be that they feel relieved in being rid of their bonds of consecration to the Lord. Alas! they glory in their shame. What need we wonder if anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, bitterness, backbiting, assassination, slander and murderous hatred take the place in their hearts and conduct, once filled by the spirit of brotherly kindness, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering?

Let all the children of the light, begotten of the holp Spirit, rejoice in the only liberty that is really a blessing, the liberty wherewith Christ makes free those who become his bondservants. These are set free from the bondage of sin—envy, malice, strife, hatred and the murderous spirit. They are *bound* with cords of love to their Master and to the *letter* and *spirit of his teachings—bound* to do good unto all men as they have opportunity, especially to the household of faith—*bound* to the altar of sacrifice with cords of devotion; strengthening as the days go by, even unto death; for such is the crown of life prepared.—Z.-10-351.

He who gives his will, his heart, to the Lord gives all; he who gives not his will, who comes not into heart obedience unto the Lord, can offer no sacrifice that could be acceptable to the Lord. "Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice," is a lesson which should be deeply engraved upon the hearts of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus.—Z. '15-78.

None might know the day and the hour when the Bridegroom would come, in the sense of His Parousia; nevertheless, all of the virgins were to be aware of His presence after He had come. Any one who did not know of it would, to that extent, lack the evidence that he belonged to the Bride class; *even the foolish virgins knew of the Bridegroom's presence.*—Z. '14-253.

Pride and self-will are the dealiest foes of all who have consecrated themselves wholly to the Lord.—Z.'92-377.

FULNESS OF JOY

"These things write we unto you that your joy may be full."—I *John* 1:4.

Joy may be regarded as the effervescence or overflow of true and genuine happiness; and it is our Heavenly Father's good pleasure that his children should be so full of happiness as to bubble over all the time. To this end he has prepared a table before them, even in the presence of their enemies, and filled their cup of happiness full, even to running over. (Psa. 23.5). This table of good things is his precious truth, to which we, who were poor, condemned creatures under sentence of death, but sincerely penitent and desiring to return to God, have been graciously invited.

There, most prominently spread out before me, lies a most precious document: it is my *pardon,* sealed with the precious blood of Christ and signed by the great Sovereign of the Universe. It reads, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." And thereto is appended this emphatic assertion, challenging contradiction—"It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?" (John 3:16; Rom. 8:33, 34.) "What?" I exclaim, "does that mean me?" Yes, says the document, if you are one of the world—one of the condemned posterity of Adam—and willing to accept this free gift of God through Jesus Christ his Son, then this pardon is *yours.* And you need no one else to tell you so. Do you not hear? .*"It it God that justifieth.* Who is he that condemneth?"

With tears of gratitude I gladly accept the favor and, truly, if there were nothing more on the table we might well say, Our cup is full. But no: there is more, much more; and, drying my tears, I see that side by side with this blessed document lies another which guarantees full restoration, to all the willing and obedient, of all the rights, privileges and blessings originally granted to our father Adam, but which he long ago forfeited, not only for himself, but for all his posterity. It reads, "Times of refreshing (or renewing) shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, . . . whom the heavens must retain till the Times of Restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21.) Praise the Lord! I exclaim; that fixes a definite time when the blessings of liberty from sin and death shall begin to be *actually* realized.

O! how we rejoice; and even though we still wear the prison uniform of a diseased and dying body, and still abide within the prison wall of this present dying condition, we rejoice in hope of the glorious day of release.

But while clasping and holding and rejoicing in this precious hope, my eye catches sight of a beautiful card. With trembling hand and a vague suspicion that this may be still another message of divine love, I lift it and read, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house: so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him."—Psa. 45:10, 11.

Was ever a proposal of marriage couched in more delicate and beautiful phrase? With astonishment I read again and again. Surely it can mean nothing less than this: I am invited by the King of kings to become the bride of his royal Son—his only begotten Son and heir of all things. And since clothed with the imputed robe of his righteousness, which hides all the unrighteousness of my own robes, I am really considered beautiful in the eyes of the King, I am told, so that he desires to make his bride—if I am willing for his dear sake to forget my own people and my father's (Adam's) house—the world in general, with all its hopes, aims and ambitions.

And while I gladly accept the offer and hasten to make ready for the glorious consummation, I find on this bounteous table explicit directions as to how I may fit myself to behold the King in his beauty—of how I must appear in this precious robe of his righteousness which now makes me beautiful in his eyes, and that I may work out upon it the "fine needle work" (painstaking embroidery) of an actual righteousness. Then, too, there are encouragements to perseverance in overcoming the world, to faithfulness in making ready for his appearing and to watchfulness against any snares by the way. Then there are warnings of the dangers and hardships of the pathway which are permitted to prove my love and loyalty by my faithful endurance. And there are copious promises of grace sufficient for every time of need. And there is line upon line to assure and reassure my faith of my Heavenly Father's good pleasure to thus exalt me to joint-heirship with his Son and to make me meet for such exaltation by making me also a partaker with him of the divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:4.) Then there are precious secrets for those thus elected of God—with reference to the time and manner and circumstances, etc., of the Lord's appearing and to the glory and honor and blessing of the coming inheritance and the blessed mission of the coming kingdom. Ah! surely, Lord, "thou hast prepared a table before me in the presence of mine enemies my cup *runneth over,*" and I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Ah, says the inspired Apostle who wrote some of these things, and who saw the Lord and heard his teachings when he was here in the flesh—"These things write we unto you that your joy may be full. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us (fellow-heirs of the same promises); and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:4,3.) O what condescension on the part of the divine Father and Son and what favor toward us! We all are one—one family—the divine royal family whence universal blessings shall shortly flow to all creatures in heaven and in earth.

But hold: there may be some who unworthily claim this honor while really they have no part nor lot in the matter. The only conditions upon which we can claim these precious promises are those of faith and obedience. And if we are still trusting in the finished redemptive work of Christ, and obedient to the heavenly calling, we are walking in the light of God's promises and instruction. And since in God is no darkness at all, and he has promised to guide us continually by his spirit through his Word, *we cannot walk in darkness while we follow his leading.* And in thus following where he leads and hearkening to his voice, and in making known our wants and our gratitude and love in prayer, which he has promised always to hear and heed, we have sweet fellowship with him and with his dear Son, our Lord Jesus. And not only so, but *we have sweet fellowship also with all saints who are faithfully traveling in the same way..*

"This, then," says the Apostle, "is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." If we have fellowship with him we are walking (progressing) in the light—in the light which divine truth sheds about us and in the light of his approving countenance.

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness (walk contrary to his truth) we lie (for God does not lead his 'children' that way), and do not the truth. Ah, there is the trouble. *If any walk in darkness (away from the truth and toward error) it is not God's fault, but their own, in not obeying the truth... Dearly beloved, let us walk in the light.*—Z.'93;-27,28.

HEARTS THAT ARE PERFECT

The testing will not be as to whether our bodies are perfect, but whether our hearts are perfect. If our heart is perfect before God, we shall bring our words, our actions and our thoughts into harmony with the Law of Love to the extent of our ability. If we see to it that we *keep* our hearts thus loyal, we shall become more and more a copy of God'sdear Son, our Heavenly Bridegroom; and we shall enter in due time with exceeding joy into our "house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." Then our Lord will present us before the Father—the "Bride adorned for her Husband"; He will present us with exceeding joy, BLAMELESS.

Oh, the blessedness of this thought! *Can we be blameless?* If we reach the Kingdom, dear brethren, we shall indeed be blameless! Meantime, our characters are to be blameless here. God would never blame us for things we could not help, but only for the things we could help; and He has made an arrangement whereby if we have made mistakes we can go to the Fountain of cleansing. If we strive to do our best, and if we go daily, or oftener if necessary, to the Mercy Seat for pardon and cleansing, we shall be spotless in the Father's sight; and in His own due time He will give us perfect bodies like our Lord's. Then we shall be perfect in the most absolute sense.

So long as we stay in the imperfect flesh we shall need the Throne of Heavenly Grace. We shall need mercy and assistance from the Lord every day. If we are faithful at heart, our mistakes will help us to be more watchful, more positive, than before. The Lord so arranges His providence as to teach us the necessary lessons. As we grow in the Divine likeness, we shall more and more come to love as God and Christ love—to love character, to love the principles of righteousness. We have never seen God or Christ with our physical eyes, yet we love them above all else. (I. Peter 1:8). We have never seen the Apostle Paul, or the Apostle John, yet we love them; for we know their characters are lovable and worthy of admiration. We love the personality which shines from their writings, the beauty of their spirit. We love St. Paul because he counted all things but loss and dross that he might win Christ and be found in Him. We are to love whatever is good and noble and worthy, and in proportion as it is so.

What do we love in each other? Is it the shape of the head, the symmetry of the features, the cut or style of the clothing Oh, no! We love one another in proportion as we see the Master's likeness in each other. If one is much like Jesus, we love such a one all the more. This is the Heavenly, the spiritual love. This is the kind of love which we are to cultivate day by day. All other affections are to be entirely secondary. Let our love and esteem be for the things that are highly esteemed in the sight of God; let these be more beautiful to us than all else, that we may become like unto our Father in Heaven.—Z.-16-165.

PERILS AMONG FALSE BRETHERAN

2 Cor. 11:26.

Our Christian experiences differ; no two have exactly the same, because our temperaments and talents differ as well as our surroundings. But we may rely upon it that no real son of God is exempted from the needed trials of patience, faith and love. No matter how strong the character or how seemingly impregnable to the ordinary besetments, we may rely upon it that such have as great trials and crosses as others—perhaps greater—perhaps such as would prostrate weaker ones, whom the Lord will therefore in love and mercy not suffer to be tempted above that they are able to bear.

Even our blessed Lord Jesus, though perfect, had to pass through an experience to test and prove his complete submission to the Father's will. Looking at our Lord's testing, we cannot doubt that his strong character was measurably unmoved by the sarcastic, bitter words and threats of the Scribes and Pharisees, and that likewise he speedily and firmly settled Satan's temptations negatively. And none of these things which would have been the greatest temptations to others seemed to move or even to greatly annoy him. He answered cooly and often sarcastically and ironically the attacks of open enemies.

It was when those who "dipped in the dish with him, lifted up the heel against him" and left him, that his heart was troubled—wounded by professed friends. The only discouraged expression recorded, relative to his work, was toward the close of his ministry, when the test became more and more severe and "many went back and walked no more in his company," saying of his doctrines, "This is a hard saying who can hear it?" His unreproachful but sorrowful words, then expressed to the twelve especially staunch, were full of pathos and disappointed grief: "Will ye also go away?" The prompt response of Peter—"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of lasting life"—must certainly have come as a comforting balm to that noble, loving heart whose only impulse was to do good and bless others.

And yet, as it came to the close of his ministry, the time came that he must still further suffer wounds from those he most loved. And catching a clear view of how his sacrifice was to be completed, how all his bosom disciples would forsake and disown him, and how one of them would betray him with a kiss, no wonder that was one of his most sorrowful trials and disappointments. He was sorrowful, troubled in spirit, and testified, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of *you* shall betray me." And when Peter courageously said, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee"—and so said they all—Jesus saw that all would be scattered, forsaking him in his most trying hour, and that courageous Peter would be so terribly sifted of Satan and prove so weak that he would even swear that he had never known him. Truly *these* trials from "brethren," some of whom were only weak, and some false at heart, must have been among the sorest of our Lord's experiences, during his period of trial. Yet none of these things moved him or for a moment influenced him to choose another course. He cheerfully followed the *narrow* path and left it for God, in his own time, to bring forth his righteousness as the light of noonday. He was obedient to God, and faithful to the truth, and it was thus that he suffered not only at the hands of evil men but also from the misunderstanding of his closest friends—who did not clearly understand the situation, nor see how needful it was that he should first be Redeemer before he could become Restorer and King.

* * * * *

The same lesson of perils among false brethren, and among brethren who had not so fully as himself grasped the Truth was the Apostle Paul's experience, too.

We never hear from him a complaint about the way the world rejected his message and spoke evil of him and maltreated him as the leading exponent of the unpopular doctrine of the cross of Christ, which was opposed both by the stumbling blind Jews and by the worldly-wise philosophies of the Gentiles. Indeed, instead of being downcast or discouraged at his past experiences and in the future prospect that bonds and imprisonments awaited him, he boldly and cheerfully declared, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself."—Acts 20:19-24.

But, like the Lord Jesus, Paul had his severest trials from "false brethren," who, instead of being faithful yoke-fellows and co-workers with Paul as good soldiers of the cross, became puffed up, heady, anxious to be leaders. These, being unwilling or unable to see the truth as fully and clearly as did Paul, because of their condition of heart, and being envious of his success, and the results of his zeal and labor, followed after him in the various cities where he had labored, and by misrepresentation of his *character* as well as of his teachings sought to lower him in the esteem of the household of faith, and to thus open the way for various sophistical theories which would reflect honor upon them as teachers of what they claimed were *advanced truths,* though actually subverting the real truth in the minds of many.

The only annoyance ever manifested by the Apostle Paul, in any of his letters, was upon this subject of his misrepresentation by false brethren. Referring to these false apostles by name, that they might be known and recognized as such (1 Tim. 1:19, 20; 2 Tim. 4:10, 14-17; 2 Cor. 11:2-23), he clearly exposed their unholy motives, of pride, ambition and envy, which scrupled not to make havoc of the church and of the truth. Especially did he point out that in their attempt to be leaders, they had manufactured a different *gospel . . .*

Paul was zealous for the truth's sake, lest these false apostles should, by smooth words and by misrepresentations of his character and the truth, use that as a lever to turn men aside from the true Gospel.

He warns them against those teachers, not to keep himself uppermost in their hearts, but to put them on their guard, lest receiving the new teachers they should be injured by the *false* teachings they presented, and lest in rejecting him and losing confidence in him as an honest and true man and teacher they should discard his teachings which were the truth. Hence his reference to himself was not a self-defense and self-laudation but a defense of the truth and an endeavor to have them see that his character and career as a true teacher comported well with the true message he bore to them.

And he fearlessly pointed out that men might ***claim to present the same Jesus, the same spirit and the same Gospel, and yet be false teachers and deceitful workers*** transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And he says, marvel not at such a thing as that men should be great workers in the name of Christ from ambitious motives: "No marvel, for Satan himself fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing, therefore, if his ministers also transform themselves as minister of righteousness."

* * * * *

Do not be deceived by the agents he often makes use of. In this he will be as cunning as in his presentation of the deceptive misrepresentations of truth, making unwitting use of many a weaker brother, and to some extent of every stumbling and deceived one, to spread the infection of false doctrine farther. And while every child of God should take earnest heed, that he prove not an occasion of stumbling to any, we cannot doubt that every one will, through some instrumentality, be assailed by it.

Aptly indeed did the prophet liken it to a pestilence, (Psa. 91:6). A pestilence spreads because people are in a physical condition which renders them susceptible to disease. Physicians will tell you that they whose systems are in good, healthy order are in little danger of any disease. So it is with a spiritual pestilence: it will flourish not only because all will be exposed to it who have not a clear intellectual appreciation of the doctrines of Christ, but from another cause also. Out of the heart are the issues of life, and most needful of all to be in right condition is the heart. How is your heart, dear Brother, dear Sister? Is it proud, boastful, independent, self-conscious and self-willed? If so, take care; you will be very liable to this epidemic, no matter how far from it you may seem to be. Make haste to labor, to pray for

"A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
The dear Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak
Where Jesus reigns alone."

With such a heart you are safe.—Z:May '90:3 and 7.

SIFTINGS PERMITTED AND INTENDED

If from time to time the Lord shall permit Satan to sift his Church "like wheat," let us remember that our great advocate's assistance in proper measure and power will bring to all who are *loyal at heart* the needed grace and strength for every temptation. He will not suffer such to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but with the temptation permitted will provide a way of escape. We must expect, however, that these siftings of the wheat are not only permitted but *intended to separate some,* and it is not for us to murmur or complain against Divine Providence in this matter. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Even though those who are being "sifted" have been very dear to us, as St. Peter and the other Apostles were to the Lord, it is for us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.—I. Pet. 5:6.

On the other hand, while remembering the Scriptural injunction to "mark them which cause divisions . . . and *avoid them*" (Romans 16:17), we should not allow any bitterness respecting them to enter our hearts or to escape our lips or our pens, no matter what they may say or do against us. "See that no man render evil for evil nor railing for railing, but contrariwise." Let us be like our Lord who, when reviled, reviled not again. As we see some going blind respecting precious truths which they once saw clearly, it will properly grieve our hearts for them. But we are to remember that the Lord's cause will lose nothing; that it is in the hands of the Omnipotent One, who is able to make all things work together for the fulfilment of the counsel of his own will—his glorious purposes. Would we smite the blind? Surely not! Then neither should we by act or word be unkind to those who are "going out from us, because they are not all of us"—those who in this hour of temptation are being smitten down by the arrows of the Adversary because, from the Lord's standpoint, not deemed worthy of the necessary succor.—1 John 2:19.

The three important lessons for the Lord's faithful to be sure that they have learned are these: (1) That meekness, humility, is of primary importance, not only to gain an entrance into the Lord's family, but also to maintain a place therein. (2) That obedient faith, abiding truth, is an indispensable quality, not only for the eternal future, but also for the maintenance of our proper relationship to the Lord in the present life. Without it we would wander and be uncertain in all our course. With it we may abide in meekness under our Lord's protecting care. (3) Love, the essence and sum of all the graces, must rule in our hearts richly, abundantly. A proper love for God will not only keep us very meek, very humble, very teachable, but will also give us great faith, great confidence in him and an attitude of heart which he will be pleased to guide aright. A love for the brethren will make us meek and gentle and willing to lay down our lives in their interest. If we know these things, happy are we if we do them.—Z.'09:294.

WATCH AND PRAY LEST YE ENTER INTO TEMPTATION

In the case of our Lord and the apostles we see illustrated the value of watchfulness and prayer in the dark hour of trouble. Our Lord followed the direction he gave to the disciples: He watched, he prayed, he got a blessing, he was strengthened, and came off victor. They did not watch and did not pray, failing to realize the necessities of the occasion, and as a result we find them scattered, bewildered: and one of them, the very strongest of them all, who boastingly had said a little while before, "Tho all men forsake Thee, yet will not I," was so overpowered by his surroundings, and so weak through lack of the very strength he should have obtained through watching and prayer, that he denied the Lord with profanity.

Whenever we find the Lord's people attempting to live a life of holiness and consecration, yet ignoring the injunction of our Lord to watch and pray, we know that they are unwise: and that however much they may be virgins, pure ones, they are foolish; they cannot hope to gain the victory over self and sin and the Adversary, singlehanded, alone. If the Master himself needed strengthening, surely we also need it; and if he received it in response to supplications with strong cryings and tears, it is an intimation to us of the way in which God is pleased to bestow the full assurance of faith which is able to strengthen us as good soldiers to endure any and everything in his name and service. *Those who seek the Lord earnestly and in prayer are as sure to receive a blessing as was the Lord Jesus himself;* and although there will not come to them the same kind of heavenly messenger to comfort and encourage them, nevertheless a heavenly messenger of another kind *will surely be sent. It* may be in the person of a fellow-disciple, able to enter into and sympathize with us in our trials and difficulties, as none of the apostles could sympathize with our Lord or assist him. Or it may be that the messenger sent will be one of the apostles themselves, through the many gracious words of inspiration which God has communicated to us through them in his Word. But however the strength may come, it must be the assurance, not of men nor of angels, but of God, that we are pleasing and acceptable to him,—and that we may claim and expect the exceeding great and precious things which he has in reservation for them that love him.

So to speak, we are now in the hour of trial which cometh upon the whole world to try them. The present is represented in the Scriptures to be "The hour of temptation" or testing at the close of this age. It is the Gethsemane hour, in this sense of the word, to all who are the Lord's true people, fully consecrated to him. It is the hour, therefore, in which we, like our Lord, should be seeking the Father's face to receive the full assurance that we are his, and that he is ours; and that we may rely confidently on his strength to carry us through this time. It is the time in which we are to make sure, as we sometimes sing:

"O let no earthborn cloud arise
To hide Thee from thy servant's eyes."

It is a time in which those who neglect the Master's words, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," will be sure to enter into temptation, and be tolerably sure to fall therein. And the fall will be severe. . . .

Some make the mistake of praying without watching; others make the mistake of watching without praying; but the safe and only proper method is that which our Lord directed, to combine the two. We are to watch, and to be on our guard against the encroachments of the world, the flesh and the devil. We are to watch for all the encouragements of the Lord's Word, the evidence of their fulfilment, the signs that betoken his presence and the great changes of dispensation just at hand. We are to watch for everything that will strengthen us in faith and hope and loyalty and love; and while watching we are to pray without ceasing. We are to pray together as the Lord's people; we are to pray in our homes, as families; we are to pray in secret, in private. *We are to have the spirit of prayer in all that we say and do:* that is to say, our hearts should be going out continually to the Lord for guidance in all of life's affairs, that we may do with our might what our hands find to do, in a manner that will be acceptable to him, and that we may be shielded by him from temptation that would otherwise be beyond our endurance, and that we may be ultimately delivered from the Evil One and have a place in our Lord's kingdom. Brethren and Sisters, let us more and more remember and put into practice these words of our Lord, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."—Z.'01 :80.

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Though but few take this step of entire consecration to God's will, still fewer live it out practically, *keeping their hearts constantly submissive to the Lord's will only; hence few keep their hearts fully in the love of God* (Jude, 21): and hence it is that so few enjoy the full measure of the joy and peace and communion with God, which is the privilege of all the fully consecrated and faithful. To maintain our hold upon our new relationship as consecrated sons, to maintain the *spirit* of adoption now, and to realize in due time our promised joint-heirship with our Lord Jesus in the divine glory, we must let, permit, and not oppose the Lord's plan and leading—let our wills remain dead to self and subservient to God's will, and let God's will direct and rule all our course of action according to his plan. It is thus that we are to fulfill the apostolic instructions—"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts;" "Let this mind (this disposition of heart and consecration of will) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Col. 3:15; Phil. 2:5.

And it is in *anticipation* of our joint-heirship with Christ in glory, that the fully consecrated rejoice to partake of his affliction, as the apostle exhorts, saying, "Rejoice, inasmuch as (or to the extent that) ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with *exceeding* joy."—1 Pet. 4:13.—Z. '93:234.

Never was there a more important moment for the Church than now. When the great Enemy has special power because it is "the hour of temptation which shall try all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth," every soldier of the Cross must be more alert than ever. But let us put character and principle *first,* then patience, gentleness, meekness.—Z. '09:140.

Everlasting life will granted only to those who, when they learn of it and the terms upon which it will be granted as a gift, seek for it, by living according to the spirit of holiness. They shall *reap* it as a gift-reward.—Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:8.

To gain this everlasting life we must become the Lord's "sheep" and follow the voice, the instruction of the Shepherd. —John 10:26-28; 17:2, 3.—Z.'95-238.

A friend accompanying another to a railway station said, he was about to board the train, "Remember, I will be th you all the way." He meant that his thoughts would with his friend and that he would be concerned for his lfare, etc. In a similar, and yet in a fuller and broader se, the Lord is ever present with his people. He is always nking of us, looking out for our interests, guarding us in ger, providing for us in temporal and spiritual things, ding our hearts, marking every impulse of loving devotion im, shaping the influences around us for our discipline efining and hearkening to our faintest call for aid or athy or fellowship with him. He is never for a moment guard, whether we call to him in the busy noon hours in the silent watches of the night. And not only is the Lord sus thus present, but the Father also. How blessed the alization of such abiding faithfulness! And no real child God is devoid of this evidence of his adoption. Sometimes is more manifest than at others; as, for instance, when me special trial of faith or patience or endurance neces- tates the special call for special help, and forthwith comes e grace sufficient with a precious realization of its loving urce. Thus

"E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

very true child of God has these precious evidences of nship, and the roughest places in his pathway are so illuminated with divine grace that they become the brightest, nd memory continues to refer to them with thankfulness; nd faith and hope and love grow strong and inspiring.

Our Lord always links the progress and development of ur spiritual life with our receiving and obeying the truth, nd every child of God should beware of that teaching which laims to be in advance of the Word, and that Christ or the oly Spirit speaks to such advanced Christians independently f the Word. The snare is a most dangerous one. It cultiates spiritual pride and boastfulness, and renders powerless e warnings and expostulations of the sacred Scriptures because the deluded ones think they have a higher teacher welling in them. And Satan, taking advantage of the delusion, leads them captive at his will.—Z. '93:245, 246.

Paul gives a vivid picture of the true Christian life which e cannot ponder too carefully: "Giving no offence in any ing (against the principles of truth and righteousness) that he ministry be not blamed. But in all things approving urselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by ureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the ight hand and on the left; by honor and dishonor, by evil eport and good report; as deceivers and yet true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; s chastened and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor yet making many rich; as having nothing, and possessing all things."—2 Cor. 6:3-10.—Z. June. '86:6.

John (the Baptist), as we have shown, was a striking type of the true Church in the "harvest" or end of this Age. We, ike John, must stand aloof from *all* those whose cry is, "A onfederacy, a confederacy!"—Isa. 8:11-13.—Z.'95.-9.

The trial of our faith is not left to CHANCE. It is supervised by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.—Z.'12-321.

"IN THE WINE-PRESS ALONE"

"In the dusk of our sorrowful hours,
The time of our trouble and tears,
With frost at the heart of the flowers,
And blight on the bloom of the years,
Like the mother-voice tenderly hushing
The sound of the sob and the moan,
We hear, when the anguish is crushing,
'He trod in the wine-press alone.'

"And, therefore, he knows to the utmost
The pangs that the mortal can bear:
No mortal has pain that the Master
Refuses to heal or to share.
And the cries that ascend to the Loving
Who bruised him, for us to atone,
Are hushed at the gentle reproving,
'He trod in the wine-press alone.'

"How sudden so e'er the disaster
Or heavy the hand that may smite,
We are yet in the grace of the Master,
We never are out of his sight.
Though the winnowing winds of temptation
May forth from all quarters be blown,
We are sure of the coming salvation—
The Lord will remember his own.

"From him, in the night of his trial,
Both heaven and earth fled away;
His boldest had only denial,
His dearest had only dismay.
With a cloud o'er the face of the Father,
He entered the anguish unknown;
But we, though our sorrows may gather,
Shall never endure them alone."
—Z. '92:54.

LOVE "rejoiceth in the Truth." However profitable error might be, love could take no part in it, and could not desire the reward of evil and error. But it takes pleasure in the Truth—truth on any subject, but especially the Truth of Divine Revelation, however unpopular it may be, however much persecution its advocacy may involve, however much it may cause the loss of the friendship of this world and of those blinded by the god of this world. The spirit of Love has so strong an affinity for the Truth that it rejoices to share loss, persecution, distress, or whatever may come against the Truth and its servants. In the Lord's estimate it is all the same whether we are ashamed of *Him* or His *Word;* and of such He declares that He will be ashamed before His Father and the angels. Love has no sympathy with hypocrisy or pretense. ***It is transparent and honest in character.***—Z. '15:118.

Mark well that it is not a case of such unfaithful servants being ***liable*** to get into outer darkness, into error: it is a case of *MUST*... The Master's orders are peremptory and decisive: "*Cast* the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." The light now shining is ***not*** for the unfaithful, but for the faithful servants; and no matter how clearly the unfaithful may have seen and understood the deep things of God, and no matter how he may have enjoyed them, if he has not loved them so as to serve them and sacrifice his conveniences for them, he is unworthy of them and ***MUST*** go out into the outer darkness of the world in general. With these as with the world the disappointment of theories and plans in the great time of trouble will ere long bring the weeping and gnashing of teeth foretold.—Z. [illegible]

WHO WILL BE ABLE TO STAND?

Psalm 91 verse 7. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand (so great will be the falling away from the Truth, even among those who, like ourselves, received it once with joy and who did for a time run well); but it shall not come nigh thee." Because of thy loyalty and uncompromising faithfulness and because of the ample armor of truth and righteousness, thou shalt STAND and not fall. —Z. '17-364.

We may rest assured that the Lord knoweth them that are *his*, not only his in profession, but his in deed and in truth, and that none can pluck them out of the Lord's hand. It will not be possible to deceive "the very elect"; hence those deceived are not the very elect, whatever may be their station in the future.—Z. '95:151, 152.

We see God's arrangements; and having entered into a Covenant with God, we surely must be sober, vigilant, realizing the great battle now on between Light and Darkness, between Truth and Error; realizing that faithfulness in this "evil day" will require all the soberness of mind, all the fortitude, that we possess. We shall continually need the wisdom from on High. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and unbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5.)—Z. '15-54.

A faith which does not produce character is null and void. (Jas. 2:17). Therefore it is plain that both the heirs and the subjects of the Kingdom of God must have that character which is both begotten and developed by the faith of the gospel; for if the faith of the gospel be held in unrighteousness there is no place in the Kingdom for any such.
—Z. '94-388.

"A pure heart."—That signifies purity of will, intention or purpose, which, like the needle to the pole, always turns toward righteousness. Though some sudden or strong temptation may for an instant, through the weakness of the flesh, draw it to the right or to the left, yet quickly it recovers its normal position which is true to righteousness and truth. A pure heart loves righteousness and truth, and hates iniquity. It loves purity, and despises all that is impure and unholy. —Z. '94-388.

Let us stand fast therefore, in *that* liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;—allowing no one to lead us out beyond the bounds fixed for us by the Chief-Shepherd, into liberties, licenses and speculations that he never authorized. Let us abide in Him, keeping ourselves in the love of God, as saith the Apostle.—Z. '93-312.

INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Loving greeting in our Anointed King!

. . . The Lord knows His jewels, every one, wherever they may be, and He knows just how to separate all others from them. Let us not be discouraged nor dismayed but be determined to press onward and trust all to Him who is able to "save to the uttermost," and keep us from falling or being deceived. Only those who know their own weaknesses and trust all to Him will be able to stand.

Not until you reach home will you know how much the Lord is using you in printing and sending out the "Old Corn Gems," also in sending the Comforters to strengthen and comfort the saints, and no power on earth can stop that good work until the Lord sees fit to allow it. With fervent love,

BRO. ————, Oregon.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in our Master's name!

Woud you please send me three or four "Old Corn Gems" No. 11? I have lost mine and would like several to give to some of the friends here. They are precious to us and we are thankful for each issue the Lord permits us to receive. How wonderfully the Lord supplies the wants of His children! "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Thanking you very much for this favor, I am
Your sister by His grace,
————, Wis.

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

Your letter . . . duly received. How we do pray that we all may have sufficient grace to stand fast in this evil day. And we do thank our Heavenly Father for the "Old Corn Gems". They are such help and comfort. We surely look forward to their coming each time.

We were greatly pleased to note that all the dear Comforters are standing firm. . . . These separations surely remind us of Gideon's band.

We surely hope some of the dear Comforters will come this way when they go east again. If one does go this way and has the time to stop over one day, we would certainly be pleased and very thankful to have him stop over with us. But we surely don't expect any of them to go this way especially for us, for we feel that we have been especially blessed in having Brother ———— with us last winter and Brother ———— in July last.

Dear Brethren, we continually remember you at the Throne of Heavenly Grace, that you and we all may be strengthened for the trials of this hour of temptation and that we may be enabled, by His grace, to stand fast unto the end.

We are unable to tell you how we appreciate the "Gems" and the helpful letters we get from you and the help and comfort of the dear Comforters.

May the Lord bless and guide you all. Christian love to all the dear saints. Yours by His grace,
————, Montana.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Greetings of Christian love!

It is with grateful hearts that we write you this morning, to thank you as well as our blessed Lord for sending dear Brother ———— to us again. How he exhorts us to stand fast, to be unmoveable, awaiting our glorification. How good is our God! How he directs the minds of His saints into the right way!

Brother ———— gave us three wonderful messages yesterday and as I listened I thought: did such sweet things ever fall from mortal lips before. Truly it was from God.

I would like to ask about the "Gems." We have not received ours for the 1st and we miss them.

We are anxiously awaiting our deliverance. Earnestly praying His rich blessing upon His saints, I remain,
————, Missouri

OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER EIGHTEEN

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WILL MANY FALL?

Will the battle be hot—will many fall? Alas! yes, a thousand shall *fall* at your side and ten thousand at your right hand (Psa. 91:7). *A thousand to one is a very heavy slaughter and marks the severity of the battle, but evidently pictures what we may expect before our share in the battle is complete.* THE THOUSAND FALLING TO ONE WHO WILL STAND, IS AS REAL AND TRUTHFUL AS THE STATEMENTS OF THE SAME PROPHET RELATIVE TO THE TROUBLE COMING UPON THE WORLD.

Do you ask the cause of so many falling, and the means by which the few shall stand? We answer that they fall because the Apostle's words have not been heeded—"Take unto you the *whole armor of God* that you may be able to withstand in the evil day." (Eph. 6:13.)—Z. Nov. '8

"WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"

1 Peter 4:12.19.

"It does not matter what it means, poor heart,
The dear Lord knows, to bear it is your part;
Nor think some strange thing happens unto you
Which He would not allow so if He knew.
HE DOES KNOW. In His all-wise Fatherhood
He knows it, and allows it for your good.
He is not hard; you do not think He is
When in the dark you find your Hand in His;
When it was light you tried to walk alone,
And thought the strength He gave you all your own.

"You did not ask what that last blessing meant;
Just smiled and took it, satisfied, content.
You did not think it strange. You thought He knew
And planned the sweet surprise which came to you.
Tried one, then do you take life's sweet and good,
Yet cannot trust that tender Fatherhood,
But think it makes mistakes whene'er it sends
Some hindrance which your eager haste offends?

"Or when He lets the wicked plot you harm,
And stir a whirlwind when you seek a calm,
You think it strange, this trial swift and keen,
And in your weakness ask, 'What does it mean?'

"I think the language of God's heart would read:
'I love My child, I note his slightest need;
I long to prosper him in all his ways,
To give him quiet nights and peaceful days,
But if I do, he'll lose himself from Me,
My outstretched hand he will not wait to see;
I'll place a hindering wall before his feet;
There He will wait, and there we two will meet.

"I do it not in wrath for broken laws,
Or wilful disobedience, but because
I want him nearer, and I cannot wait
For him to come, for he wanders late,
My child will wonder, will not understand,
Still half in doubt he'll clasp My outstretched hand;
But when at last upon My heart he leans
He will have ceased to wonder what it means."

—Z. '11:427.

CONVENTION NOTICE

There will be a Standfast Convention at Victoria, B. C., October 11th-13th inclusive. Address all communications to Brother J. H. Bartlett, Marigold P. O., Victoria, B. C. Brother C. E. Heard will act as Chairman. The speakers will be Brothers Campbell, Yerex, Heard, Baker, Houghtaling, Maxwell and Rice. Meals will be provided for all and accommodations for the Lord's poor.

COMFORTER VISITS

Brother R. O. Hadley—
- Minneapolis, Minn.—Sept. 28-29
- Whalen, Minn.—Oct. 1-2
- St. Olaf, Iowa—Oct. 3-4
- Milwaukee, Wis.—Oct. 5-6
- Staunton, Va.—Oct. 8-9
- Chicago, Ills.—Oct. 11-12
- Springfield, Ills.—Oct. 14
- Kansas City, Mo.—Oct. 17-18
- Neosha, Mo.—Oct. 19-20
- Joplin, Mo.—Oct. 21
- Alva, Okla.—Oct. 23-24
- Dallas, Tex.—Oct. 26-27
- San Antonio, Tex.—Oct. 29-30
- Los Angeles, Calif.—Nov. 2-3
- Riverside, Calif.—Nov. 4-5
- Oakland, Calif.—Nov. 7-9

Brother W. B. Palmer—
- Minneapolis, Minn.—Sept. 28-29
- Withee, Wis.—Oct. 1-2
- Sheboygan, Wis.—Oct. 3
- Milwaukee, Wis.—Oct. 5-6
- Madison, Wis.—Oct. 8
- Chicago, Ills.—Oct. 11-12
- Springfield, Ills.—Oct. 15
- Kansas City, Mo.—Oct. 17-19

Brother H. A. Livermore—
- Minneapolis, Minn.—Sept. 28-29
- Whalen, Minn.—Oct. 1-2
- St. Olaf, Iowa—Oct. 3-4
- Milwaukee, Wis.—Oct. 5-6
- Zion Cit, Ills.—Oct. 8
- Chicago, Ills.—Oct. 11-12
- Springfield, Ills.—Oct. 14-15
- Kansas City, Mo.—Oct. 17-18
- Neosha, Mo.—Oct. 20
- Tulsa, Okla.—Oct. 21
- Alva, Okla.—Oct. 23-24
- Dallas, Tex.—Oct. 26-27
- San Antonio, Tex.—Oct. 29-30
- Los Angeles, Calif.—Nov. 2-3
- Riverside, Calif.—Nov. 4-5
- Oakland, Calif.—Nov. 7

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER EIGHTEEN

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL. Z. '18:51.

Decision in Character Building

"How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him, but, if Baal, follow him."—1 Kings 18:21.

MULTITUDES are in an undecided condition of mind, not only as respects the worship of God, and as respects their faith, but also in regard to the common affairs of life. They are not devoid of good intentions, good resolutions, hopes and ambitions; but these are rather vague and shapeless. Their thoughts, their intentions, have not crystalized. As a result they are making little progress and accomplishing little good, either in or for themselves or others.

Even those who have been so highly favored of God that the eyes of their understanding have been opened,—that they have caught glimpses of the glorious things in reservation for the Lord's faithful, are frequently lax and measurably indifferent to these wonderful things which should induce them to zeal and inspire them with courage and strength. What is the difficulty? Why do they not accomplish more? The answer frequently should be that it is because of indecision. They should decide promptly, but they hesitate,—holding *important* questions in abeyance, and *continuing to balance and to weigh matters which they already determined are right.* They halt between two opinions; they hesitate to take the Lord's Word fully and entirely, and to walk boldly forward in the right direction, even when they clearly discern the footsteps of Jesus and the proper course for them as his followers. As one point after another comes up and is thus set aside indefinitely, the whole Christian course of that individual is stagnated and fresh duties and privileges as they appear, are stopped in the way by the muddle of mind which unsettled questions of years produce; this indecision has more or less hindered them all their lives. By and by there is such an accumulation of undecided points and matters that they feel the case is almost hopeless, become discouraged, grow cold, indifferent, and perhaps fall completely away from the faith and its service.

For all such our text is specially appropriate. We want to decide, first of all, who is our Master, who is our God; then, having concluded, we want to decide promptly that his servants we should and will be. The Master warned us of the impossibility of any other course being satisfactory, saying, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Attempt to do so will make us and all with whom we are particularly identified unhappy. . . . .

What manner of persons ought we to be?" We ought most positively to be committed to that which we believe to be the truth, and we ought to be most zealous in its service.

A part of the mistake is in the exercise of a wrong kind of caution;—proper enough in respect to earthly affairs, in which we have to guard our interests against unscrupulous fellows but out of place, impediments, in our dealings with God. This wrong caution says,— Do nothing, until you see how it will all end:—I must walk by mental sight at least. But this kind of worldly wisdom will not do, in dealing with God. He makes the rules by which we may approach him and progress in his favor. One of his rules is, that every item of truth we learn must be accepted and acted upon before we are ready for more. They that receive the truth in the love of it, will surely serve it with all the decision they can command and acquire:—piece by piece, as they receive it. They who on receiving truth balance it and ponder long whether it will not ultimately cost too much, thus give evidence that their love for the *truth* is not great enough,—that it is mixed with selfishness. Such must cultivate love of the truth until it outweighs all other things, else they will not be fit for the Kingdom.

The Lord's charge against those who are about to fall in the present testing time, is that,—They received not the truth in the *love of it.*—2 Thess. 2:10-12.

"CHOOSE YE THIS DAY."

After Israel had reached the promised land, Joshua sought to bring them to such a point of decision. He called them together, recited to them the Lord's favor and blessing enjoyed thus far, and expressed himself in noble language, saying. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Josh. 24:15. . . . .

We are not advocating rashness—the doing of something without a reasonable, proper amount of consideration. But we are urging upon the Lord's people the cultivation of promptness, ***decision of mind,*** in respect to questions we have sufficiently examined. Some things may of necessity require pondering, but many things in life require no such delay to reach a proper decision. The majority of the questions which present themselves before the bar of our minds could be decided in a moment; and the less time we take in reaching a decision on such problems the better for us, and for the upbuilding of proper character in this regard.

We need to have some touchstone, as it were, some matter which will help us to decide, which will enable the mind to reach a decision quickly. This touchstone should be *God's will;* so that TO PERCEIVE THE LORD'S WILL IN RESPECT TO ANY QUESTION WOULD BE TO SETTLE IT—AS QUICKLY AS DISCERNED. There should be no thought of opposing the divine will. There should be no temporizing, no haggling to see what a thing would cost, once we discern that it is the Lord's will. There should be no further question about the rejection of any matter which we discern to be contrary to the Lord's will; no matter how enticing, no matter how much of profit or of advantage there may be connected therewith.

Ability to decide quickly, and to decide always on the right side, what the Lord's will is, requires some experience and discipline; but the sooner we begin the sooner we will become proficient; the more energetically we set ourselves to know the Lord's will and to do it, and to show him by our promptness that we delight to do his will, the better and the quicker will we find our characters established on proper lines.

There are many gods presenting their claims to us and seeking our reverence. To some, perhaps to the vast majority, self is the most prominent idol and false god; to others it is fame; to others the family; to others wealth. But all these false gods are more or less related, and the one name, Mammon, selfishness, is appropriate to them all. It requires not a great deal of discernment to decide that none of these ambitions is worthy of us, and that the worship of our hearts and the sacrifices of life should all be to the true God.

TODAY IF YOU SHOULD HEAR HIS VOICE, OBEY!

The Scriptures appeal to us along these lines of prompt decisions, and it is because these appeals are neglected, not obeyed, that many of the Lord's people are so lean and so undeveloped, both in knowledge and character. Mark the appeal, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The suggestion is that the matter be not put off another day. We cannot tell how distinctly we will hear the voice of the Lord's providence speaking to us tomorrow. On the contrary, we know that even as we may become accustomed to an earthly call, or an earthly alarm, so that by and by it would cease to awaken us, so our spiritual ears become accustomed to the important messages reaching them from the Lord's Word. They will have less and less weight and influence, and will become less and less helpful to us in proportion as we neglect them and fail to act upon them. *Does not this explain the fact that some who have newly come into the truth, are farther along both in faith and good works than some whose ears were blest long ago?*

We have all noted with pleasure the wonderful success of that wonderful Apostle Paul. It is well, therefore, that we shall note that one of the chief elements contributing to the success of his apostleship was this element of character—decision. Mark how this quality of his shines out in the statement, "This one thing I do," etc., He had only one real aim or purpose in life, toward which he was bending all his energies. He had cast aside all others as weights and hindrances, and as not being worthy to be compared with this one service, so high in its point of privilege. The one thing he did was to serve the Lord, to serve the brethren, to serve the truth. All other matters were secondary to this. If he could accomplish this one thing the results would be so blessed, so happyfying, both new and everlasting that he could afford to count all other things and objects and aims as loss and dross and not worthy of comparison.—Phil. 3:7, 8, 13, 14.

This is the spirit that all of the Lord's overcoming people should have. All do not have this character or quality of disposition by nature; but in proportion as we lack, the Lord will reckon to us of his own merit to compensate, if he finds in us the spirit, the will, the disposition, to thus follow the example of Jesus and the Apostles and all the faithful. If we are weak in this respect, lacking in this quality of decision and firmness of character, we need to be more alert and to go the more frequently to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and to find grace to help. But those who are naturally weak, and who yet have tried this matter according to the lines here laid down,—who have sought to cultivate this principle of character and decision and firmness for the right, give abundant testimony that the Lord is their helper and that in thus following the directions of his Word and the examples of faithfulness, they have become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. . . . .

Let us not forget that it is just such a class that the Lord is seeking, to be the Bride and joint-heir of his Son. He is not looking for those who are perfect in this respect; for there is weakness along this line throughout the whole human family; there is none perfect in this or in other respects, none fit for the Kingdom by nature. It will encourage us, perhaps, to remember that the Lord is taking the weak things of the world and making them strong, and that in proportion as we submit our wills to his will we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, and that he thus works in us to will and to do his good pleasure in the establishment of strong, decisive characters, through the promises of his Word. To it, as represented in Jesus, he exhorts to look, while we endeavor to run with patience the race set before us, trusting in him who has redeemed us and called us, and who has promised to be our ever-present helper in every time of need. —Z. '02:41-43.

"MY COVENANT WILL I NOT BREAK"

"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips."—Psa. 89:34.

and satisfying to his faithful children. As faith becomes a

THESE WORDS of Jehovah God are very comforting basis for things hoped for, so confidence and experience constitute a basis for faith to rest upon. The unchangeableness of our God is one of the attractive features of his character: his assurance is, "I am the same, I change not." Even when the Lord's word or sentence is against us—as in the case of his pronouncement against sin and sinners —and even though his unchangeableness will not permit him to excuse sin or clear the guilty, this very constancy becomes an assurance to us that as God has been strict and unchangeable in regard to the penalty pronounced, he will be equally strict and equally unchangeable concerning all the good promises and covenants which he has made to us.

As an illustration of this unchangeableness, we note the fact that under the death sentence six thousand years have elapsed, and over 50,000,000,000 of our race have gone into the prisonhouse of death:—yet God has not relented or shown the slightest sign of change. His sentence was a just one, and it could not be revoked. Then came in his love; and without violating his justice he provided a great sin-offering,—"a ransom for all." In connection with this manifestation of love, in man's redemption, the Creator gave certain covenants and promises; and as we have learned of his unchangeableness in respect to the curse, the sentence, we learn proportionately to have confidence in his unchangeableness in respect to the promises he has made our race, based upon the great redemption effected for us.

"O, what comfort it brings,
My soul sweetly sings,
I am safe from all danger
While under his wings."

It is considered worldly wisdom to take for granted that man will keep a covenant which he subsequently finds to be to his own disadvantage, unless he is bound by some kind of penalty— by the law. And those who have not learned to expect something of this kind of worldly wisdom in connection with their worldly affairs, have oftimes been sadly disappointed and worsted; and their plans and arrangements based upon the covenants of others have been marred.

The tendency of such experiences is to shake our confidence in humanity in general—and alas, sometimes, to shake our confidence even in some who have named the name of Christ and professed to be our brethren. Nevertheless, even such trying experiences have always worked blessings to such of the Lord's children as have accepted them in the proper manner. Such have said to themselves, The more I find of unfaithfulness and injustice in mankind, the more do I appreciate the absolute faithfulness and justice of the Lord, and of such of his people as do prove themselves loyal to principle; and the more earnestly do I determine that my own course in life shall be such as will always acknowledge the principle of justice, and make my positive and finished bargain and engagement like our Lord's—unbreakable, unalterable.

The Lord indicates not only his own estimation of this principle but his desire to see it in all who aspire to membership in his family. To such he says, "Blessed is the man who voweth to his own hurt and altereth not." The Lord would have us careful how we would make covenants, vows, either to him or to others; but having made them, his will is that we shall consider them sacred, inviolate; even though we should find subsequently that the arrangement was working out unfavorably as respects our temporal interests.

"THAT WE MIGHT HAVE STRONG CONSOLATION, WHO HAVE FLED FOR REFUGE TO LAY HOLD UPON THE HOPE SET BEFORE US: WHICH HOPE WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, BOTH SURE AND STEADFAST."—Heb. 6:18,19.

The words of our text apply to these exceeding great and precious covenant-promises of the divine Word. They assure us that our God will never break these covenants—yea, more, that he will not even alter, or amend, or change them in any particular. We can rest in hope, assured that he who has begun the good work in us and on behalf of the world, is able not only to complete the work in us, but to accomplish more for the world than it or we can ask or comprehend. Does not this knowledge of the immutability of the divine covenants give us a confidence, a faith in the Lord which brings with it strong consolation for every trial, every difficulty, every disappointment of this present time—assuring us that all of our experiences are working together as parts of a great whole of the divine program, not only our glory, honor, immortality, but for the blessing of the world of mankind? They surely do! Halelujah, what a Savior!

If now we allow our minds to gather into some extent the scope of these promises as expanded and explained by the apostles in the New Testament, we see that they take hold of not only the life which is to come, but also of that which now is. They give us new joy, new courage, new zeal, new incentive in connection with the common tasks and duties of life,—to our families, to our neighbors, and to ourselves, and above all to our God. And they give us confidence and assurance in all the great and gracious hopes set before us in the gospel—in the Lord's willingness to do for us, and in his power to do exceedingly and abundantly more than we can ask or think.

While seeking to copy the Lord in every particular, and to be fully rounded out in character-likeness to him, let us now have specially in mind as a part of the lesson of this text, God's faithfulness to his engagements; and let us, as his people, resolve that by his assistance and grace we will grow daily in this quality, in his likeness—that we, also, may say of ourselves, concerning our covenants or agreements, as the Lord says of himself, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips."—Z. '02:342-345.

"BEFORE THE COCK CROW"

The Master discerned the danger of his loving but impetuous follower, and uttered a warning word, that before cock-crowing he would deny his Master. How improbable this seemed to St. Peter! How he courageously declared, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." And so said all of the eleven. Their hearts were good. And the Lord looketh upon the heart. . . . . The Master had been arrested. The scattered disciples had fled. St. John, because of an acquaintance with the high priest's family, penetrated further into the palace than St. Peter, who stood in the court-yard. A maid of the palace recognized St. Peter as one of Jesus' disciples and so declared publicly. Fearful that he might share the fate of the Master, St. Peter denied his identity, declaring that he knew nothing about the matter. A little later another declared the same. St. Peter emphasized his denial with an oath, declaring that he knew not Jesus. Later the word spread throughout the court-yard and many took it up, declaring that they believed what the maid said and that St. Peter had the Galilean dialect, anyway. To emphasize the denial St. Peter began to curse, and to swear that he knew not the man. Directly after, cock-crowing began. Then St. Peter remembered the words of his Master, "Before cock-crowing thou shalt deny me thrice."

Alas! he had been too sure of his own stability, too confident of his loyalty. He was entrapped by the Adversary *along the very line of his boasting.* Another account says that Jesus turned and looked at Peter! That look was sufficient. It spoke volumes to St. Peter's loyal heart. It was not a look of disdain, nor one of anger, we may be sure. It was a look of loving sympathy. It melted St. Peter's heart. He went out and wept bitterly. The followers of the Master today, beset by weaknesses and frailties and temptations of the Adversary, have the lesson of St. Peter's experience as a warning to be confident in the Lord and to look to him for assistance, rather than to be self-confident. And those who fail today have St. Peter's experience as a lesson of the Lord's sympathy and pity. They, too, should weep bitterly for transgressions and repent and profit by their experiences. —Z. '10:360.

We see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the Lord fresh in our minds, and of drinking deep into its inspiring spirit, although we are already established in the faith. To be established in the faith is one thing, but to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the spirit is quite another.—Z. '93:[illegible]

LIKE UNTO JANNES AND JAMBRES

"Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest to all men, as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra: what persecution I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and leaders astray shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."—2 Tim. 3:8-14.

We are asked whether or not this Scripture is applicable to the present time; and, if so, how we shall understand the expression, "Men of Corrupt Minds"? Shall we look for these amongst moral reprobates?

We reply that we should understand this Scripture to be applicable at the present time. We should be able to find classes today corresponding to Jannes and Jambres. The Apostle distinctly says in introducing these words, "This know also that in the last days (of the age) perilous times shall come." Undoubtedly the Apostle meant that we should look for the fulfilment of his declaration in the "harvest" or end of the Gospel Age.

We are not to expect these leaders astray in the Church to be moral lepers, reprobates. Assuredly Satan would be too wise to use such as his tools, knowing that he could effect his purposes better through those who outwardly, at least, would be moral and religious. Notice that the Apostle did not say reprobate as respects morals, *but reprobates as respects the faith. It does not say men of corrupt morals, but does say men of corrupt minds—men whose minds have become perverted, changed, altered, as* RESPECTS THE TRUTH. HE WHO DOES NOT SEE ANY FULFILMENT OF THIS PROPHECY SHOULD CERTAINLY AT ONCE BEGIN TO LOOK FOR THEM AND ENDEAVOR TO LOCATE THEM.

This passage, in harmony with many other Scriptures, assures us of the trials of faith to be expected in this, our day. Remember the Apostle's words respecting the fire of this day, which shall try every man's work, of what sort it is—gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. Remember the Prophet Malachi's declaration that in this time the special Messenger of the New Covenant would sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. Remember the Prophet David's explanation of our day with its arrows, pestilences, stumbling blocks, etc., and the declaration that a thousand would fall at our side.

Let us not forget either our Lord's positive assurances, that he would keep his very own, his elect—those making their calling and election sure. Remember the declaration respecting this elect Body of Christ that a thousand shall fall at thy side, ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee, because thou hast made the Lord thy refuge and habitation. The shielded ones will be those who live very near to the Lord—not only outwardly, but in their heart experiences. These very elect have the assurance that God will give his messengers charge concerning them, so that the feet shall not be dashed against the stumbling stone, but be borne up, lifted higher by the Divinely appointed agencies of Jehovah.—Psa. 91.

Remember again the assurance of the Apostle that although this day shall come upon many "as a thief and as a snare," and that they should not escape the snares, nevertheless the faithful would not be in darkness. Remember our Lord's assurances that although trials and difficulties are to be expected which would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect, yet it will not be possible to deceive the very elect. So close will they be in sympathetic fellowship with the great Shepherd that they will discern his voice and not be deceived by others, of the Jannes and Jambres class.—Mark 13:22.

Remember also the Apostle's words, "Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand." (Eph. 6:1[illegible] He pictures the armor, the protection that would be granted to a certain class—the helmet, the breastplate, the shield, the sword of the spirit. He expressly indicated that these defences would be provided for "the evil day" with which our age would close. He specially advised that while this armor was available to all of God's people and to be had for the putting on, nevertheless only those who will put it on will be safe. Why so, is it asked? We reply that this is one of God's tests by which he would prove our love, our devotion, our loyalty to him. *Those of little love will be careless respecting the details of the Divine Plan of the Ages.* "They will not have time" to search the Scriptures. They will not be disposed to make use of the agencies which God will use for providing this armament in this evil day. They will have preference for some sectarian brand of armor *or insist that it must come from some particular quarter,* or refuse to wear any armor that they have not manufactured for themselves, or refuse assistance in putting on the armor of light.

All such objections, we may be sure, would mean to the Lord disloyalty, headiness, self-will, lack of humility, etc., incompatible with the conditions of his "call." He is looking for those who humble themselves, and who are glad to have his Truth at any cost, and whose hearts, long famished, hunger and thirst for the Truth, and who know the Shepherd's voice, and who find in his message that which "satisfies their longings as nothing else could do." These will gladly accept the armament and by becoming faithful students will make it their own—will put it on. These will be kept while others will fall at their side.

Those who fall away after once having been partially enlightened for the most part, are those who never properly applied themselves to know, to understand the Divine plan. Their disobedience to the words of the Lord through the Apostle, their neglect to put on the armor, proved that they are not of the class whom the Lord prefers in the present "election."

On the other hand it must not surprise us either, that some, after wearing the armor, they tell us for eighteen yaars and preaching to others its value and necessity, should put it off now, in the closing hours as it were. And now, while the Enemy is about and the fight in progress, they assure us that this armor is proving unreliable, that they themselves have been deceived and have deceived others and that they now have taken it off, exchanging it for a new kind of their own make and brand. We are sorry for such.

Doubtless there were many people in Moses' day who were not at all in sympathy with him and his presentations, but who let him alone and hindered him not. Jannes and Jambres, on the contrary, specially opposed Moses and sought to bring to naught the force of his presentations to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, by imitating his doings to a certain degree. It is not known if these two men were Hebrews or not. Their names are nowhere else mentioned in the Scriptures, though they are mentioned in the Jewish Talmud, where the Hebrew names given justify the inference that they were Hebrews who, to curry favor with Pharaoh or to add to their own fame, resisted Moses and his presentations of Divine Truth, seeking to nullify the influence of the latter. Have we not some similarity in the conditions of the present day? Are there not some whom St. John describes as having gone out from us because they are not of us? Do not these, instead of assisting with the Work, now seek by every power they possess to oppose it, to nullify it, to belittle its influence? But St. Paul declares that they shall not go far in this opposition until "their folly shall be manifest," as that of Jannes and Jambres was—by their failure to hinder the Lord's work.

Let us leave such matters with the Lord, to reward and to rectify in his own time and way. Let us seek by patient perseverance in well-doing, loyalty, faithfulness, to make our calling and election sure.—Z. '09; 221.

THE BLESSING OF THORNS

When we thank our heavenly Father
For the blessings of each day;
For the flowers that are strewn
O'er the roughness of the way;
When we thank him for the roses
That we gather day by day,
Do we ever see the blessing
Of the thorns along life's way?

Oft we thank him for the sunshine
That he sends us from above;
Do we ever in the shadow
Recognize his tender love?
When our feet grow worn and weary,
And our crosses hard to bear;
Oft the way seems long and dreary,
Knowing not his tender care.

When the clouds that round us darken
Change to night our radiant day,
Oft we murmur that the sunshine
Has been hidden from our way,
But our Father in his wisdom
Sends the dark as well as light;
Can we doubt his loving kindness,
In whose keeping all is right?

If no shadow veiled our pathway,
And we knew no ill to fear,
Would we cling so closely to him?
Would our Father seem so near?
As when darkness gathers round us,
And our faith in self is lost,
We but trust him, and the Savior
Gives us strength to bear our cross.

In our path if all were sunshine,
Would we look to him for light?
And if all below were brightness,
Then would heaven seem so bright?
When we meet beyond the shadows,
In that land of endless day,
We will thank our heavenly Father
For the darkness of the way.

Oft we cannot see his kindness
Through the darkness, pain and loss;
But we know the crown is dearer
For the sharpness of the cross.
And when in his throne we gather,
And our dear Redeemer meet,
We will thank our heavenly Father
For the thorns that pierced our feet.
—Z. '06:252.

PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

"This charge (message) I commit to thee, son Timothy, in harmony with the teachings previously given thee (to guide thee), that by these thou mayest carry on the good contest, holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck."

"I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession, that thou keep this commandment (Greed, entole—'this thing given in charge'—This doctrine given by inspirations) without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which (good confession or sound faith) will be manifested in due time by that blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords—the only one possessing immortality, inhabitating light inaccessible, whom no one of men has seen, nor is able to see, to whom be honor and power everlasting."—1 Tim. 1:18, 19; 6:13-16.

We have frequently noticed and called attention to the earnest exhortations and careful instructions given to Timothy by the faithful Apostle Paul. But while these instructions were applicable and profitable to Timothy in his day, they apply with still greater force to the Gospel Church as a whole, of which Timothy was a member, and of which we have reason to believe he was a figure, or representative.

Of this we have evidence in the general character of the epistles addressed to Timothy, which implies either that Timothy, or the class which he represented and of which he formed a part, would be living down into the end of the age. We believe, then, that in the person of Timothy as a representative, the entire Gospel Church is here addressed by Paul, and we notice that the name Timothy signifies "honor of God." The church honors God and is to have honor conferred upon her by God. In the present age the honor consists in the fact that so important a "charge" is committed to her trust. And those thus honored in this age, and who prove faithful to the trust, will in the next age be yet more highly exalted and honored.

Three times Paul most solemnly and earnestly repeats this charge. He thanked the Lord that though he had been a blasphemer and persecutor of the Church, yet he had obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly, and verily thought that in so doing he was doing God service, and had been put into the ministry, the glorious gospel of the blessed God being committed to his trust. (1 Tim. 1:11-13.) And now knowing that age was creeping on, and that perils surrounded him on every hand, and before writing the second letter, saying that he was about to be offered, he commits this charge to the faithful ones who must carry on the work after his departure.

The charge was to keep the blessed gospel untarnished and "without spot," to keep it in its glorious simplicity and purity, unmixed with human theories and false doctrines, which even then the enemies of the cross of Christ were laboring to introduce. ***The rising errors must be guarded against, first, by maintaining a clear conscience; and secondly, by faithful study of the Word of God.*** To study the Word of God with a clear conscience is to study it with the single and only purpose of knowing and doing God's will. This, Paul says, some in his day did not do; they had theories and plans of their own, and endeavored to wrest the Scriptures to give their theories seeming support, and thus they made shipwreck of their own faith and turned others out of the way. As the end of the age should approach such false teachers he said were to multiply and gain great influence, and overthrow the faith of all who should not meekly and devoutly walk with God, trusting alone in his faithful word.

NEXT TO GUARDING OURSELVES thus—and those who do so have the power of God pledged to keep them from falling—IS THE CHARGE TO HELP OTHERS TO STAND: to help them by *earnestly contending* for the faith: by pointing out the snares of the adversaries of the truth, and by calling attention boldly and fearlessly to every pitfall and placing the light of truth over it.

To preach this "glorious gospel of the blessed God" to present it in its purity and grandeur, to contend against the errors which friends and enemies seek to engraft upon it, is the charge given to and the duty devolving upon the church in the present time—the charge which we must keep and labor to sustain *until the appearing* (manifestation, or bright-shining) *of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Before the brightness and glory of his presence the darkness of ignorance and error shall flee away, and no hiding place shall be found for them; for the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, when his presence is fully revealed to all.

Till thus relieved of this duty of guarding the truth, the church must wait for her victory, must watch against the dangers of abounding and widespreading error, and the seducing temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, must pray for and use divine strength in enduring hardness as good soldiers unto the end, and must boldly and nobly contend for the faith delivered in charge to the saints. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Those not so doing will not be counted worthy to be gathered among Christ's jewels.

It should be borne in mind also that in the days of his presence, before his manifestation to the world, there is even greater necessity for watching and contending for the faith than at any previous time—since his presence is discerned by the church only by faith in the foretold indications, and since the perils occasioned by numerous false doctrines and many antichrists are greatly increased; so much so, that only those who have on the whole armor of God are able to STAND and to contend for the faith in the *face of such subtle and crafty opposition.* The charge is to stand well armed, and to contend for the faith *until his manifestation to the world*, in the close of the perilous times of this harvest.

How solemn the obligation:—"I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things"—the great L[illegible] giver or Father of all, Jehovah. We are his representatives in the earth; the honor of his name is to be vindicated in the presence of his enemies *and before many of his deceived children.* And his eye is upon us, marking how faithfully or unfaithfully we as his ambassadors represent him.

Not only do we receive this charge in the sight of God, but also, "before the anointed Jesus," our great example and forerunner, who also bore witness to the truth, sacrificing all things for the privilege of witnessing to it—even unto death.

. . . .

Courage, then, brethren! Our great Commander is even now upon the battle field. "STAND FAST; quit you like men; be strong!" the fiercest part of the conflict is just before the shout of victory is heard; the darkest hour is just before the dawn of day. As triumphant conquerors, O faithful few, you shall soon wear the laurels of immortality and glory.

The witnessing of the church through the long dark centuries of the Gospel age has not been in vain. The object of her mission was NOT to convert the world before the Lord's return, *but to develop her own character and prove her worthiness of the high exaltation which she is called to share with her Lord,* while bearing witness to the world of the facts of the glorious gospel, which shall be good tidings of great joy to all people, when in due time it is testified to all.—Z. July: '89:5, 6.

FROM GLORY TO GLORY

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord."—2 Cor. 3:18.

A full transformation into a likeness of character to our heavenly Father should be the constant effort of every true child of God. It is not enough that we gain a knowledge of his plan and a pleasurable realization of his mercy and grace toward our unworthy race, and that we joyfully tell the good news to others and it is not enough that we exert ourselves with uncommon zeal to bless others with those good tidings of great joy for all people; for we may do all of these things and more, and yet, if we do not let our Heavenly Father's goodness and grace have its due effect upon our own hearts, our knowledge, and even our good works, will profit us but little.

Our *main* object, therefore, in studying God's Word and his character as therein revealed, should always be to bring our own hearts and minds into closer sympathy and likeness and co-operation with his. As the Apostle says (1 Thess. 4:3), "this is the will of God, even your sanctification"—our full setting apart, or consecration of mind and heart entirely to the Lord, that he may complete the good work of transforming us into his own glorious likeness, by the operations of his Spirit through his Word, and thus fit us for the enjoyment of his abounding grace in the ages to come.

In the above words of the Apostle we notice particularly that the statement is made of *all* the Church— we *all* are being changed from glory to glory. And the inference is consequently a strong one, that *those who are not being so changed are not one of the class addressed.* This is a solemn thought, and one that claims the most careful consideration of all the consecrated. The question with us is not, Have we made a full consecration of ourselves to the Lord? but, having made such consecration, are we, in accordance with that consecration, fully submitting ourselves to the transforming influences of the Spirit of God to be changed daily more and more fully to the glorious likeness of our God?

Like the Apostle, then, addressing all the consecrated and faithful, we also of today may say, We all are being changed from glory to glory under the molding, fashioning influences of the Spirit of God. We can see it in each other, thank God! and we glory in it. Yesterday the mallet of divine providence struck a blow upon that member of the body of Christ, and an unsightly excrescence of pride fell off, and he looks so much more beautiful today, because he did not resist the blow, but gracefully submitted to it. The day before, we saw another under the wearing, painful, polishing process, to which he patiently submitted, and oh, how he shines today! And from day to day we see each other studiously contemplating the divine pattern and striving to copy it; and how we can note the softening, refining and beautifying effect upon all such! So the Spirit of God is at work upon all who fully submit themselves to his will.

But while the mallet and chisel and the polishing sand of divine providence do a very necessary part of the transforming work, by way of relieving us of many of the old and stubborn infirmities of the flesh, which cannot be so promptly and so fully eradicated by the gentler influences of the spirit, the Apostle points us to the specially appointed means for our transformation in the careful and constant contemplation of the glory of God as revealed in his Word, and also in his blessed Ambassador, Jesus Christ, saying, "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

"With open face" would signify without any intervening [illegible] of prejudice or fear or superstition, but with simplicity of heart and mind. So we behold the glory (the glorious character) of the Lord—not with actual vision, but as in a glass, as reflected in the mirror of his Word and as exemplified also in his living Word, Jesus Christ. And to aid us in this study we are promised the blessed influences of the Spirit of the Lord, who will guide us into all truth and show us things to come.

As we look into the mirror what a glorious vision we have of the Divine justice, which we promptly recognize as the very foundation of God's throne (Psa. 97:2), as well as the foundation of all our present and future security. If we could not recognize the justice of God we could have no assurance that his gracious promises would ever be fulfilled; for we would say, Perhaps he will change his mind. But, on the contrary, we can say, He changeth not, and whatsoever he saith shall surely come to pass. See with what inflexible justice the sentence upon our sinful race has been executed! Generation after generation, for over sixty centuries, has witnessed it; and no power in heaven or earth could revoke that sentence until the claims of justice had been fully met by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Justice, says the Word of God, must be maintained inviolate at any cost. And herein we read not only our rightful condemnation as a race of sinners, but also our final, complete and glorious deliverance, because *"God is just* to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9), since the precious blood of Christ redeemed us from the curse of death.

And while we thus read justice in the character of God, and mark with what scrupulous care he regards and respects this principle in all his dealings with his creatures, we see how he would have us respect the same principle in all our dealings. Thus we are led to consider what is the exact line of justice in this and that and the other transaction; and to remember also that this must be the underlying principle in all our conduct: or, in other words, that we must be just before we can be generous. This principle should, therefore, be very marked in the character of every Christian.

Next we mark the love and mercy of God. The death sentence upon our fallen race was a most merciful sentence. It was equivalent to saying: See, I have of my own free favor granted you life and all its blessings to be enjoyed forever on condition of its proper use; but now, since you have abused my favor, I take it away and you shall return to the dust from whence you came.

True, in the process of dying and of bringing forth a dying race to share the penalty, the mercy of God is not so manifest to the unthinking; but those who see the plan of God, discover in all this, not the decree of a merciless tyrant, but a merciful wisdom, but faintly disclosed in the promise that the seed of the woman shall in due time crush evil effectually—bruise the serpent's head—and deliver the entire race once generated in sin, by afterward regenerating all who will to life and all its blessed privileges. And in this mercy, in all its multiplied forms, we see the verification of the statement that "God is love." Thus we learn to be loving and merciful and kind both to the thankful and also to the unthankful.

We mark also our Heavenly Father's bountiful providence and his tender care for all his creatures; for even the sparrows are clothed and fed, and the unconscious lilies are arrayed in glory. Here we learn precious lessons of divine benevolence and grace. And thus, through all the catalogue of the moral and intellectual graces which go to make up a glorious character, we see in the mirror of the divine Word the model for our imitation; and in contemplation of all that is lovely, as embodied in him, and of all that is pure and holy and beautiful, we are changed little by little in the course of years to the same blessed likeness—from glory to glory. So be it: let the good work go on until every grace adorns the spotless robe of our imputed righteousness, received by faith in the blessed Son of God, whose earthly life was a perfect illustration of the Father's character, so that they could say—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Let us, therefore, mark well the love of Christ, the gentleness, the zeal, the personal integrity and the self-sacrificing spirit. Mark well, then imitate his example and shine in his likeness.

The Apostle adds (2 Cor. 4:7) that the fact that we thus hold this treasure of a transformed mind in these defective earthen vessels proves the excellency of the power of God, and not of us. And so, by constant yielding to the influences of the Spirit of God, we may show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9) Oh, let our efforts and prayers continually be that these poor earthen vessels may more and more show forth the praises of our God! Let them be clean in body and mind; let no evil communications proceed out of the mouth; and let no actions unworthy of the sons of God dishonor these living temples of the holy Spirit. True, on account of our deformities we may very imperfectly perform good works; but, by the grace of God, let us at least refrain from known evil.—Z. '05:328-330.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou art also called."—1 Tim. 6:12.

It is still true that they who will live Godly shall suffer persecution. To live Godly however, implies earnestness and consequent activity in God's service.

Remember too, that the Apostle refers to these last days of the age as the most perilous times of all. Why? Because the errors and temptations of this day come in more subtle forms than heretofore. This is emphatically the age of reason; an age of advancement in almost every direction; many are running to and fro and knowledge is increasing on every hand. And yet, human conceit and presumption is running vastly ahead of knowledge; and reason, unguided by the Divine Revelation, is falling into many foolish and hurtful errors, which are passing current among those who profess to be children of God, who are deceived by these errors and are falling away from the faith once delivered to the saints. And though the great Babylon system is crumbling into decay, multitudinous errors, far more injurious than the formalism and slumber of Babylon, are at work, to build upon its ruins other systems of iniquity.

These errors must be met by the faithful few who are armed with the truth,—others cannot detect or defeat them. It is for these armed with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, to show by its profound reasonings the difference between truth and error, and that God's plan in God's way is superior to all the plans and ways of human arrangement. To escape falling into these errors, and being deceived by their subtle sophistries, and by the professions of loyalty to God on the part of the deceived deceivers who advance them, the children of God must keep close to their Father's Word, and be filled with his spirit; and when they see the truth they must be bold and fearless in its defence regardless of all consequences. . . . .

This little army of faithful soldiers, all told, is but a handful, "a little flock"; but though in numbers they are so insignificant that the hosts of the opposers of the truth fear little from their efforts, the final victory shall be theirs; and God's power will be glorified and manifested in them proportionately more. *Like Gideon's three hundred picked men who feared not to face the hosts of Midian because the Lord was with them, these have but to go forth likewise, strong in faith,* sounding the trumpet of truth and breaking their earthen vessels (sacrificing their human nature) that the blessed light of God's spirit may shine out; and at the appointed hour the hosts of the enemy shall take the alarm and flee. SYSTEMS OF ERROR NEW AND OLD shall be turned to destruction, and, as in the case of the Midianites, each shall turn upon the other to accomplish the work of their destruction.

To have the privilege of fighting this good fight of faith and of being the Lord's chosen ones for the great work now to be done, God's children, like Gideon's army, must first be *proved*—tested. At first there was a host of thirty thousand with Gideon; and when all that were fearful were told [illegible] return to their homes, only ten thousand remained, and [illegible] God further tested these, only three hundred remained; a little insignificant company truly they must have appeared, not only to the Midianites, but also to themselves. Yet, God's power was made the more manifest by their smallness and weakness. JUST SO IT IS NOW.—Z. June. '88:5.

WALK HONESTLY AS IN THE DAY

While we are not yet fully in the Day, yet we belong to the New Dispensation, and therefore should live as nearly as possible in accordance with the *perfect standard* of the future. So to live will imply that we shall be misunderstood by the world; that we shall be thought foolish; and that we shall be considered enemies, not only by those in gross darkness, but particularly by those who, professing to be the Lord's people, really prefer darkness to light, error to truth.

We are inclined to lay special stress upon the word *honestly,* for we believe that the Apostle used it advisedly and in a special sense. As we look about us we find that dishonesty is very prevalent, not only in the world, where we expect a certain amount of duplicity, misrepresentation, deception and hypocrisy, but even among professing Christians.

Every true child of God should see to it that he is honest, not only in money matters, but in his treatment of his neighbors and his brethren in the Church, *and above all, in his confessions respecting his faith.* The test is being made along this line, and those who love the favor of men rather than the favor of God will be given opportunity to prove that they are unfit for the Kingdom, whatever else they may be fit for. The Apostle tells us (2 Thess. 2:11) when speaking of this evil day, that God will send strong delusions that a certain class may believe a lie, because they were not honest, but acted deceptively, hypocritically.

HONESTY THE BASIS OF CHARACTER

Probably the most valuable trait of character is *honesty.* Where there is little honesty, there is little character; where there is great honesty, there is great character. We mean not merely honesty as to dollars and cents, pounds and shillings, but as to the very thoughts and intents of our hearts, as well as to our words. . . .

The Apostle says, "Let us walk honestly." Let us take our proper stand for the Truth. While we should always speak the Truth in love, whether to our enemies or to our friends, while we should always have consideration for the opinion of others, *yet we should take our stand firmly.* We doubt that the Lord would care to take into the Kingdom any who are not honest. *We fear, therefore, that those who have high positions are "deceiving and being deceived."* (2 Tim. 3:13.) There is such a thing as deceiving one's self by repeating a sentiment until one believes it.

The lesson to us is that, however others may walk, we must see to it that we "walk honestly as in the day" (Rom. 13:13), as though we were living in the broad daylight, so that if the world understood all about any transaction of ours they would realize that we are honest—even as the Lord understands all about it. Any other course is dangerous and is not "walking as in the day."—John 11:9.—Z. '12:288.

FALLEN ANGELS EXCEL IN STRENGTH

The fact that Jesus discussed matters with the Adversary does not furnish us with an excuse to try our ability in this direction. For any of us, with our imperfect reasoning faculties, to get into a discussion with Satan or any of the fallen angels would be very unwise. There are doubtless reasons why our Lord conversed with Satan; but it would be very unsafe for us to do so. If we are sure that we have had a communication from fallen angels, let us remember that we are commissioned to preach to *men,* not to *angels.*

Some of the Lord's people have gotten into difficulty by not using the spirit of a sound mind along this line. Evil spirits have a way of drawing the unsuspecting on, little by little. They are "seducing spirits," as St. Paul tells us. (1 Tim. 4:1.) A brother in the Truth once told us of his experience with them. Strange to say he was in the Truth when he had communication with the spirits. He did not say how he first got into communication with them, but he explained the Divine Plan of the Ages to them and told them what would happen to the fallen angels. For several days they manifested interest, coming frequently to hear him. After a while they began to dispute among themselves and finally to curse one another.

The brother had so cultivated the clairaudient power that he could hear them. In disgust he tried to get rid of them. Not only would they not go, but they made matters intolerable for him. Finally he wrote us in distress, asking what method to use to get rid of them. We advised him to go to the Lord in prayer, confessing that he had done wrong, and asking the Lord's forgiveness; then, in the name of the Lord, to command them to leave him. Afterward he wrote us that he had followed our advice, and after a tedious time had finally gotten rid of his unwelcome visitors.

POWERS OF EVIL INCREASING

As the time of trouble draws near, we can readily suppose that our Adversary will have increased power. Satan and his fallen angels will have a very baneful influence upon humanity.

Some peculiar occurrences have been brought to our attention. One was an account of a picture manifestation. A picture had been taken of a piece of property. When the photograph was developed it showed the likeness of a man who was recognized as a former owner who had been dead for some time. It seems evident, then, that evil spirits are able to exert some influence even upon a camera.

Another case was that of a person who declares that he actually saw certain things which could not possibly have taken place. How this could be we do not know. We do not know what powers evil spirits may posess. We have all heard of cases of mesmerism, hypnotism, etc., where the person under control of evil spirits was able to describe accurately things taking place at a distance. We cannot tell [illegible] these things are done. We assume that it is the fallen angels who have power so to impress the brain of the medium that she would seem to see what was being done in another city. In our dreams we see people walk and hear them speak. If we can have such mental pictures naturally, we may easily suppose that evil spirits may have power in this direction.

RESIST EVERYTHING AKIN TO OCCULTISM

The *facts,* however, do not make us understand the *philosophy* of the matter. Nor do we know to what extent these things will be used in the future. We have no doubt that some very startling events will occur. Even to those who have the knowledge of the Divine Plan the things permitted will be strange. We should be prepared for almost anything that may be told.

We have great confidence in the power of these evil spirits who claim to do wonderful deeds. In fact, we can see that while materialization would be possible to them, yet a representation to the mind would be much easier. To impress upon the brain would also be easy. Suppose such power were to be exercised, and the Lord's people misrepresented by the Adversary as doing some desperate act. *Be prepared for all such things. It is too near the end of the race to think of turning back.*—Z. '12:262.

THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS

(A strong thought was hidden on page 2, OLD CORN GEMS No. 16, by a printer's error, the mutilated paragraph is here reprinted so that all may receive full benefit from our Beloved Pastor's words.)

A greater number, perhaps, are in danger of getting into fellowship with the scorners or unteachable than with others; yet fellowship with such leads to the same spirit; and that leads gradually to violation of the covenant with God; and that leads to open wickedness and willful sin. The safe way is to have no fellowship with darkness; it is never profitable. . . . . Come out from among them; and neither sit, nor stand, nor walk, in fellowship with such. (Rev. 18:4; Isa. 52:11.) STAND WITH GOD EVEN IF THAT SHOULD SEEM TO IMPLY STANDING ALONE. The Lord knoweth them that are his. . . . . Verse 2. Some might suppose that one thus isolated would have an unhappy lot; but no, he is truly said to have a delightful experience. He delights day and night in meditating upon God's will and plan. In this he finds a joy and a peace which the world and a worldly church can neither give nor take away. One thus consecrated and full of the spirit of the Lord finds that God's laws of righteousness are not restraints which he would fain be freed from; but, like the Master, he can say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is engraven in my heart."—Z.'92:90.

''ARE YE ABLE?''

"Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of?"—Matthew 20; 22.

We recall the circumstances under which these words were uttered by our Savior: It was just a few days before His crucifixion Jesus had promised His disciples that they should sit with Him in His throne in His Kingdom. So confident were they that this would be as the Lord had said that they were discussing the positions they might occupy. The mother of the two disciples, James and John, came to Him and asked whether her two sons might sit, the one on His right hand and the other on His left, in the Kingdom. And Jesus, turning to the two disciples, replied by asking them: "Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

We know that Jesus' baptism in water took place at the beginning of His ministry. In harmony with the Divine Plan, He was to die as the Savior of men. And He symbolized this death as soon as He was thirty years of age—as soon as was possible under the Law. During the three and a half years of His ministry, He was accomplishing this baptism, He was pouring out His soul unto death, and this death He finished at Calvary. Jesus said, "The baptism that I am (being) baptized with"—*now*—not a baptism which was either *future or past.*

But He spoke differently of the Cup—"the Cup that I *shall* drink of." He thus implied that the Cup was *future*—not in the present nor in the past. He had told His disciples that He would go up to Jerusalem; and that there He would be crucified, and on the third day He would rise again. And he said on another occasion, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." What the Master said about His being crucified the disciples did not understand. But Jesus understood the situation, and He knew that this Cup was about to be poured for Him. And so He spoke of it again, saying of Himself, "The Cup that My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?"

OUR LORD'S SPECIAL TRIAL

We might think of the word *Cup* as representing various experiences of life—that everybody has his Cup of mingled joy and sorrow. But Jesus used the word in a different sense. When He was in the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from Me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." And again the same night He prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this Cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done!" In the matter of His baptism into death, there was no hesitation on our Lord's part. On the contrary, from the very beginning He voluntarily participated in it. The *ignominous* death was the thing He prayed might pass, if it were possible. But this was what He learned was the Father's will for Him, and He was content to have it so.

There was nothing in the Law to indicate that our Lord should be executed as a blasphemer of the Divine Law. Yet blasphemy was the charge preferred against Him. The Sanhedrin decided that He was a blasphemer in that He had said, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it again," and also in claiming that He was the Son of God. Apparently, then, the thing which was specially weighing on His mind and from which He would have liked to be relieved was the ignominy and shame of being crucified as a criminal, as a blasphemer of the Father He loved so well.

Jesus knew that He had come into the world to die, and that He must suffer. But *this* part of His experience He had not fully understood. Evidently He knew that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up"; for comparatively early in His ministry

He had stated this in His conversation with Nicodemus. But as He came down nearer and nearer to the time of His humiliation, His degradation, and realized all that it meant, He felt a great shrinking from it and poured out His heart in the cry, "*If it be possible*, let this Cup pass from Me!" But immediately—proving that His affirmation, at the time of His consecration, "Lo I come to do *Thy* will, O God," was not empty words—He added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as *Thou wilt!*"—Matthew 26:39.

ARE WE WILLING TO SHARE HIS IGNOMINY?

And so to His disciples our Savior said: Are you able to lay down your lives completely, even though this shall mean to you injustice in the taking away of your lives? Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of? There will be disgrace and ignominy connected with it all. Are ye willing to share with Me in this, My Cup? They answered: "We are able." They were willing.

This, we see, is the same Cup represented in the Communion Service. The bread represents the body and the wine the blood of our Lord. The Cup especially represented the shame and ignominy connected with His death; and the two disciples said that they were willing to share His Cup—they had no hesitancy. At any cost they would be faithful. They would comply with any conditions He would make. They did not, of course, yet know the full import of the word *baptism* or of the word *cup*. These were things all His disciples were feeling after. When Pentecost should come, these things that Jesus had spoken to them would come to their remembrance, as he had foretold. (John 16.4; 13-19.) But they were willing and anxious. And that is all that we can be. Jesus guaranteed that, being willing, they should have these experiences; that continuing willing, continuing to suffer with Him here, they should reign with Him in His Throne. But as to the particular place for each in the Throne, that would not be for Him to say, but for the Father.

The courage, the fortitude, of our dear Redeemer in walking the *narrow way* fills us with admiration. How strong and brave was His character? He had no thought of looking back; His whole being was intent upon accomplishing the will of His Father in Heaven—upon sacrificing Himself in the interest of the world. What a noble Example was set before the Apostles!—*greatness in humility, victory through entire self-surrender!*

DRINKING OF THE LORD'S CUP BY THE CHURCH

The drinking of the Lord's Cup by the Church, represents our participation in the sufferings of Christ in the present time. The drinking of the blood, then, is the sharing of the Cup. For if we drink not of His Cup, neither shall we share with Him in His glory, He said, "Drink ye *all* of it." *All* must drink, and the *entire Cup* must be drained during this Age.

It is a very great privilege that we are permitted to have a share in the sufferings of Christ... "If we suffer (with Him) we shall also reign with Him." We shall participate in the inauguration of the New Dispensation, and in dispensing its blessings. The Antitype of Moses, who will do the sprinkling, is Christ, the Head and the Church His Body, glorified, of whom we read in Acts 3:22: "For Moses truly said unto the Fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me"—that is, Moses was His type, on a smaller scale. The Body is now being raised up. Jesus was first raised up, then all the Apostles; and following after, the remaining members of His Body.

As Moses sprinkled *all* the people, so this antitypical Moses, when completed, will "sprinkle" the world of mankind: and this will mean the bringing of them into harmony with the Divine Law. It will require the thousand years to "sprinkle" mankind. So there is a great difference between the drinking of the Cup and the sprinkling of the blood. The sprinkling with the blood represents justification, while the drinking of the Cup by the Church represents, not only justification, but sanctification.

OUR LORD'S RECOGNITION OF THE DIVINE PURPOSES

Our Lord, in His memorable words to St. Peter—"The Cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"—referred, evidently, to His dying experiences, which were severe in the extreme. He was dishonored of men and reckoned as an enemy of God—a blasphemer. His physical sufferings He knew would be intense, but to His perfect mind the shame and disesteem, the opprobrium, added greatly to the poignancy of His anguish. Yet this was the Cup the Father had given Him; it was the Divine purpose respecting Him.

Our Lord had all the experiences necessary for proving and testing His loyalty; for it was necessary that He manifest His loyalty before both angels and men. The whole matter had been Divinely arranged from before the creation of man. He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8.) Everything pertaining to that slain Lamb was foreknown by the Father. Jesus was to drink the Cup which belongeth to the sinner, in order that He might redeem man and might thus be a faithful and merciful High Priest. This was the Cup of suffering and death. It was necessary that Jesus should suffer the death of the cross, in order that He might redeem the Jew.

LOVE AND LOYALTY MANIFESTED BY SUBMISSION

All His sufferings were foretold in the Scriptures. The crucifixion was pictured by the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. All of His experiences were foreknown, forearranged and necessary. When He came to earth to do the Father's will, He did not know of all that was to come. But He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, the things which were "written in the Book." He submitted Himself to all the Father's will, and thus He proved His loyalty. As He Himself declared, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of My Father which sent Me!" As the hour of the consummation of His sacrifice drew near, in the lonely shades of Gethsemane, the Master prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from Me!" We are not to suppose that He prayed for the Cup of death to pass away; but He wondered whether or not the ignominious experiences of the crucifixion might pass. Yet we find that He did not murmur nor rebel, but said, "Not My will, but Thine, be done!"

SPECIAL SUPERVISION OF OUR CUP

We see that our beloved Lord drank of the bitter Cup to its dregs, and did so thankfully. And we are to remember that He gave the Cup to *us*, that *we* should all drink of it—not that we should all have exactly the same experiences that He had, but that we must all drink of the Cup of suffering and death in the Father's own way, Jesus was the Perfect One, and the Father dealt with Him in a very particular manner.

In our cases the experiences would be different; because of our imperfections we could not be dealt with from the standpoint of perfection. We are, therefore, not to think of our Cup as a definite, fixed program as was the Master's, but rather that the Father permitted us to have a share in the Cup of death with His Son. *Our Cup is supervised by our Savior,* although it is the Cup poured by the Father; for it is the Father's Program.

In the Master's case the Cup was necessary for the sins of the whole world. In our case it is not necessary, but it has pleased the Father to grant us a share in the sufferings and glory of our Lord. Jesus makes good our deficiencies and develops our characters, fashioning us into His own glorious Image. Without this supervision of our Cup by our Lord, we might be very poorly developed in many qualities; therefore our Cup needs to be specially supervised. And so He assures us that, while the necessary experiences are coming to us at the same time His grace will be sufficient, and His strength will be made perfect in our weakness, and all things will be made to work together for our good.

Let us never forget that unless we partake of His Cup, unless we are immersed into death with Him, we can have no share in His Kingdom of glory, we can never sit with Him in His Throne. Let us then count all the things of this earth as loss and dross that we may attain this Pearl of Great Price. As the experiences of suffering come to us, let us not be affrighted, not "think it strange concerning the fiery trials that shall try us, as though some strange thing happened unto us"; for even "hereunto were we called," to suffer with our beloved Master now, and by and by be glorified together with Him in the Kingdom eternal!

"Are ye able to walk in the narrow, strait way,
With no friend by your side, and no arm for your stay?
Can ye bravely go on through the darkening night?
Can ye patiently wait till the Lord sends the light?
"Ah, if thus ye can drink of *the Cup He shall pour,*
And if never the banner of Truth ye shall lower,
His beloved ye are, and His crown ye shall wear,
In His Throne ye shall sit, and His Glory shall share!"

—Z., '14:84-86.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Brothers C. E. Heard, F. M. Campbell and A. A. Yerex are now in the west visiting the friends throughout the Pacific coast states, and will be present at the Victoria, B. C., Convention, October 11-13.

To live a holy life is not to do some great and wonderful things: it is only to live from day to day a life of quiet unostentatious conformity to the will of God, of secret communion with him in our closet devotions and daily walk, and of zealous activity to the extent of our ability and opportunity in his service. There is in reality no such thing as the "wonderful piety," the "eminent piety," or the "wonderful faith," of which we often hear and read. There is nothing wonderful about piety: we ought to be pious. Why not? And when our piety becomes "eminent," let us beware of self-righteousness and sanctimonious vain-glory. Neither is there anything wonderful about a clear and steady faith and confident trust in the sure promises of God. Why should we not have faith sufficiently sure and strong? The Christian who bears the strongest testimony for God is the one whose faith is just simple enough to take him at his word, and whose piety consists simply in reverent and loyal obedience to the will of God and in the faithful study of his will, with a view to personal conformity to it. Such need not hesitate to take the name of God—to declare themselves the children of God, and Christians or followers of Christ, and to openly profess that thus they are daily submitteing themselves to God to be led of his Spirit.—Z.'93-148-149.

How strange it seems that some cannot realize this; but when they hear His call, "Come," "Come out of her, (Babylon—confusion.) they seem loath to leave, and unused to the *liberty* wherewith Christ makes free, they inquire, If we come out, *into what shall we go?* They are so used to bondage, to systems and forms and rules of men, that they cannot realize the strength of the fold which has no other bars than the Word of God; they cannot realize the *oneness* of that flock which is kept together simply and only by bonds of *love* one for another and for the Shepherd.—Z. July '84:1.

To walk circumspectly is to walk cautiously, with watchfulness every way, with attention to guard against surprise or danger. and not as fools or those destitute of understanding. In this evil day it is *important* that, having escaped from the former darkness, we *be not again deceived and led back.* Once started on the backward track, it is only a question of time how soon we reach the former, or a worse darkness. —Z. June '84:5.

There is special need now to heed Paul's warning to walk cautiously, with a constant guard against surprise or danger, and not as those destitute of understanding, or as those who have never been enlightened. To some, under the delusive snares of the adversary, we have noticed that the most unreasonable and most unscriptural assertions were received and held to with a tenacity which baffled all efforts for their rescue, while that which they once hailed with delight as the truth of God, seemed but an idle tale.—Z. June '84:5.

Having been called with this Heavenly Calling, we can readily understand that God would not have us in this class unless we have the right spirit. The selection is not according to a whim of Divine preference. On the contrary, *God chooses according to character, according to natural qualifications of honesty and the desire to be just, to be right, whatever may be the fleshly weaknesses.* Justice is the very basis of God's Throne, the foundation of His Government.—Z. '16-58.

CALMNESS OF TRUTH

All Truth is calm,
Refuge and Rock and Tower;
The more of Truth the more of calm,
Its calmness is its power.
Truth is not strife,
Nor is to strife allied.

It is the *error* that is *bred*
Of storm, by rage and *pride.*
Calmness is Truth,
And Truth is calmness still;
Truth lifts its forehead to the storm,
Like some eternal hill. —Z. '12:339.

ALL MUST BE TESTED AS TO LOYALTY TO GOD

Satan was tested as to his loyalty to God. Adam and Eve were tested as to their loyalty to God. In the time of Noah the angels were similarly tested—not as to whether they preferred right to wrong, but as to their entire loyalty. Jesus Himself was tested as to His loyalty to the Father. So mankind, at the end of the Millennial Age, will be tested as respects their heart harmony with God. . . . .

So today. Our attitude should be to recognize that there is but one God and one Lord Jesus Christ; and that we will obey them. In due time we shall see God's Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power fully demonstrated; that they are fully harmonious in all of the affairs that God has permitted. Those who can see this by faith, are now demonstrating their loyalty of heart to God.—Z. '11:361.

How just, how reasonable and how favorable is God's arrangement for us! Yet he assures us that, while he has made all the arrangements favorable for us, he must insist on our wills being just right—we must be pure in heart, and in this respect exact copies of his Beloved Son, our Lord. (Rom. 8:29—*Diaglott.*) Of those who learn of and accept God's grace in Christ, in the forgiveness of sins under the New Covenant, all of whom are called to this high calling of joint-heirship with Christ in the Divine nature and its honors, *only a few will make their calling and election sure (or complete), because the testings of their wills and faith are so exacting—so crucial.*

Nor should either of these God-declared facts surprise us: it is not strange, but reasonable, that God should *test* severely, yea, with "fiery trials" (1 Pet. 4:12), the faith and love of those invited to so high a station. If they be not loyal and trustful to the last degree, they surely are "not fit for the Kingdom," its responsibilities and its divine honors. Nor should it surprise us to be informed by God's Word that only a "few," a "little flock," will gain the prize to which many are called and for which many consecrate. Few are willing to "endure" a great fight of afflictions; partly while being made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly as companions of those who are so abused for Christ's sake and his Truth's sake.—Heb. 10:32, 33.—Z. '03:439.

God's revelation is a mirror of his character, in which we see reflected his purity and love and goodness; and as we therein trace the lines of his glorious character the desire grows and strengthens to be more like him whom we thus learn to admire and love.—Z. '92:281.

The adversary seems continually on the alert to invent some new error or else to revive and revamp some old one, to deceive God's children. And God permits all this, as he has told us, that those being gathered as wheat into his barn may thereby be thoroughly threshed and winnowed or separated from the chaff. God sends, or permits the ambitious ones to bring upon themselves, strong delusions that all who take pleasure in the error may have plenty of it to enjoy and to deceive themselves with, that all such may be condemned, separated from the simple, trusting, humble, non-ambitious, faithful ones whom he is about to glorify in his Millennial Kingdom.

But while God permits wilful men to fall into such erroneous views and to prosper in spreading them, he does, on the other hand, guide the meek in judgment and teach them his way, and he raises up a standard for them by which they are enabled to see the truth and to distinguish it from error. And though, in this "evil day," a thousand shall *fall* under those errors, they shall not overthrow the meek ones whom the Lord is pledged to guide and to keep from falling. He will give his messengers a charge concerning them, and in their hands shall they bear up the feet of the body of Christ, lest they should stumble over that stumbling-stone which stumbled all but a small remnant of the fleshly house of Israel, and which is now to stumble all but a small remnant of the nominal spiritual house. (Psa. 91:10-12; Isa. 8:14.)

He has given to us a charge or message for the feet upon this subject, a message of truth which will bear them up—the complete and glorious harmony of the divine plan of the ages. "They," the feet class, "shall never fail": though they stumble, they shall not be utterly cast down.—Psa. 37:24.—Z. Dec. '90:3.

"*Delight* thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." This delight in the Lord is a still more advanced step in the Christian life. It is a blessed thing to learn to trust in the Lord; but it is when continued trust and responsive providences have ripened into personal acquaintance and fellowship with God that we learn to delight in him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the divine care and love are specially seen in the guidance of our way: in a word, when we come to feel that the Father and the Son have so clearly manifested themselves to us that we can recognize their abiding presence with us. Ah! then it is that we begin to delight ourselves in the Lord. Then, however dark may be the way, or however heavy may be the storm that rages about us, the balm of divine consolation is always there, so that the child of God, though often troubled on every side, is not distressed; though perplexed, he is never in despair; though cast down, he is not destroyed; and though persecuted, he is never forsaken.

To delight thus in the Lord is to have the affections centered in him; it is to have the heart in such sympathy with righteousness and truth as to see in God the fountain of all goodness and truth, the one altogether lovely.—Z. 95:166.

Although the exact time of the deliverance or "change" of the last members of the body of Christ is not stated, the *approximate time* is nevertheless clearly manifest, as *shortly after the "door" is shut* (Matt. 25:10); after the truth, which Babylon now begins to regard as her enemy, and as calculated to accomplish her destruction, shall have become more generally known and widely circulated; after "the hail" has to a considerable extent swept away the refuge of lies; and after the now smoldering and menacing hatred of the truth is thereby roused to an opposition so violent and so general as to effectually stop the further progress of the great work in which the saints are engaged, *and God will permit this as soon as all the elect are "sealed."* But, whatever of trouble or seeming disaster may await the saints while they remain in the flesh, and put a stop to the work which it is their meat and drink to do, let us take comfort in remembering that nothing can befall us without our Father's notice and permission, and that in every trial of faith and patience his grace shall be sufficient for those who abide in him, and in whom his word abides. Let us look beyond the vail, and keep the eye of faith fixed upon the prize of our high calling, which God has in reservation for them that love him—for the called and faithful and chosen according to his purpose. —Rev. 17:14; Rom. 8:28. We may thus reasonably and scripturally approximate the time and circumstances of the FULL deliverance of the Church.—C. 231, 232.

They (the little Flock) will be saved from that great hurricane of trouble which will follow their departure, as well as preserved in the forepart of the battle in which A THOUSAND will fall into infidelity, and be overcome by the various pestilences of error, to ONE who will stand.—C. '241.

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."—Titus 2:14.

We might theorize much and very correctly upon how and when and by whom we were redeemed; but this all would avail little if we forgot *why* we were redeemed. The redemption was not merely a redemption from the power of the grave;—it was chiefly *"from all iniquity."* And the Lord is not merely seeking a peculiar people, but specially a people peculiarly cleansed, purified.—Z. '99:216.

All of the Lord's people should be extremely careful about compromising the conscience.—Z. '05:297.

The "shaking" (Heb. 12:27) which is now due to take place in the house of God is a part of the same which will ultimately extend to the whole world, causing a great time of trouble, setting every man's hand against his neighbor. The Apostle declares this, assuring us that everything that can be shaken will be shaken out, so that ultimately, both in the Church and subsequently in the world, only "those things which *cannot be shaken will remain*." The same spirit of bitterness and wolfish back-biting will ere long reach the world and set every man's hand against his neighbor. Under another figure the Apostle explains the same situation, saying that "Every man's work shall be tried so as by fire," AND ONLY THE DEVELOPED CHARACTERS WILL STAND. Naturally, and properly, *these "siftings" are severest upon those who have been most favored of the Lord.* "Who shall be able to stand?"—Z. '09:42.

Our Head, our Lord, was perfect as a man and gave a perfect sacrifice, without spot or blemish, for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world; and as our blemishes were laid upon him and he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, so his perfections were imputed to us so that we bear his righteousness. He, the holy, the pure one, was made a sin offering on our behalf, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. 5:21, *Diaglott.*

For such an high priest, holy, harmless, separate from sinners, became us (suited us, was necessary for us). He was tempted in all points *like as WE ARE,* and is able to sympathize with and assist us in our efforts to be dead to every worldly ambition, and alive only to the will of God. Wherefore, let us go to him in confidence and trust his every direction as to every step of the way; for he will not suffer (permit) *us* to be tempted above that we are able to withstand, but will provide a way of escape. (1 Cor. 10:13.) Trust him, then, unflinchingly, confidently, and do your part as far as you *are able,* assured that you shall not be tried *further.*

"Wherefore, *holy brethren,* partakers (with Christ Jesus) of the heavenly calling, *consider* (think of, notice carefully) the Apostle and High Priest, of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful." (Heb. 3:1-2.) Consider the necessity of his being tested before being so highly exalted, and you will not wonder that you as partakers of the same "high," "heavenly calling" should be *severely* tried to prove faithfulness to God's word and plan, that you may be worthy to share in his glory. Consider that though your Master was perfect before he became a man, and perfect as a man, yet before being so highly exalted as he now is, it was proper that he should be tested to perfection, to the last degree (Heb. 2:10); that when he shall command obedience of all to Jehovah, it will not be possible for him to demand more of any. than he would and did himself yield to the Father. Thus the already perfect, sinless, holy, "man Christ Jesus" was proved worthy of, or perfected for, the *divine nature* and great exaltation, upon which he entered fully at his resurrection.—Z. Aug. '87:7.

The careless, indifferent, and lukewarm may lightly heed the words of warning, and scarcely discern the necessity which prompted them; but the faithful saints earnestly aspiring to attain that whereunto they are called, realize the necessity and thankfully heed them.

We should bear in mind that our foes are unseen, wily, and deceptive, and that if there is a weak or unfortified place that is where the enemy will make the attack. We need therefore to study well our position, and to know every avenue by which the enemy may approach. First, last and all the time we need to watch that the spirit of Christ in us is not displaced by the spirit of the world which so continually surrounds and allures us from our chosen course. We need to watch that we be not entangled with the cares of this life; we need to watch that no root of bitterness springing up may trouble us. We need to watch that the fruit of the spirit of God is manifest in all our actions.—Z. May '84:1, 2.

We realize that our heads need keeping: and some of us at one time might have been inclined to say, "Keep thy head with all diligence, in line with the doctrines of Christ, and thy heart will be all right, for God will keep it." This, however, is a mistake. God has stated the matter correctly. We are not competent to keep our heads. We are competent and responsible for the keeping of our hearts. If we diligently keep, watch, guard our hearts from evil, and in full harmony with the Divine Word and its spirit of the Truth, righteousness, love, God will do the rest. He will guide our imperfect reasoning faculties, and we shall know his doctrines.

Keeping the heart signifies keeping guard over our sentiments. It signifies a critical inspection of every motive of life. Why do we speak? What is the object desired? Why do we do this, or not do that thing? Is the motive honorable, just, loving? Do we love righteousness? Do we hate iniquity? Is the love of God being more and more shed abroad in our hearts? Is it increasing God-ward and manward, and toward the brethren? This is watching, "keeping our hearts," and implies that if a selfish thought or motive or ambition be found lurking anywhere, or seeking to guide in act or word, it should be promptly expelled—that the heart may be pure, clean. Keeping the heart means also activities in love, benevolence, helpfulness, and the cultivation of thoughts and sentiments in accord with the Divine. It means not only the purifying of the heart, but the garnishing of it with the fruits and graces of holiness and love, that it may be acceptable to the Lord. So surely as injustice or sin or impurity is harbored to any extent, the heart is proportionately defiled and proportionately unacceptable to the Lord, *and in the way leading towards repudiation by him.*—Z. '09:71.

Do not be bold, except for the right, the truth. So far as yourself is concerned preserve a reverential *fear*—of sin, and of displeasing the Master, and of losing the great reward—"the prize of our high calling." Nearly all who "fall away" first lose all fear and become *self*-confident. They forget that it is only "*If ye do these things ye shall never fall.*" (2 Pet. 1:5-10.) Z. '05:216.

The real diamond is a noble, loyal, faithful character, devoted and uncompromising in its allegiance to God. Sometimes the circumstances of life have deprived such of education or culture and have left them only sufficient means for the barest necessities of life. But no matter, God's eye is on them: character is what he is looking for, and in due time, when that character is sufficiently developed, confirmed, tested and proved worthy of exaltation, he can and will add to it all the glories of knowledge and wisdom and grace and beauty. But first he will subject it to all the necessary tests. If it is a true diamond it will receive and it will also transmit to others the light of divine truth. Nothing so gloriously reflects the light as the diamond; and nothing so gloriously reflects the truth as the worthy character of the true and faithful saint.—Z. '02:333.

The Truth seems to take hold on the stronger characters rather than on the weaker ones. The former have in their flesh more of the firmness, grittiness and combativeness than have many others, who are too pliable and "wishy-washy" to be acceptable to the Lord as members of the "little flock" of overcomers.—Z. '12:99.

INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Brethren:

I have received the roll of "Old Corn Gems," for which I do most gratefully thank you. I had shared with another Sister while in town, but since coming out here have felt the need of them so much and I felt rich as I carried the roll into the house. I believe they are doubly precious to those in isolated positions.

I pray that while you are preparing them you may all be richly blest and fed yourselves and "kept by the power of God unto salvation." . . Yours in hope, Canada.

Dear Brethren:

I am rather slow in writing to tell you how very much we appreciated having dear Brother ——— with us once more. We appreciate having the dear Comforters come whenever they can.

Is Brother ——— not coming our way soon? We hope he does not pass us by.

And I want to tell you how *very* much we appreciate "Old Corn Gems." We could not get better food at the present time anywhere, and we look forward eagerly to their coming. We take one of the subjects out of the "Gems" for each Sunday for a lesson, and it is so hard for us to choose which subject. They are all so good. And we are so thankful for them and our prayer is that our dear Father will continue to guide and direct you in this good work.

How glad we will be to see you and all the dear saints beyond the veil, and how thankful we are that the time is so near when we will see each other, and best of all see our loving Heavenly Father and our dear Redeemer face to face. Then we will be satisfied. . . With love to all, Calif.

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

Loving Greetings in His dear name!

We take pleasure in sending you our love, and wish to thank you dear Brethren, for the "Old Corn Gems" and for the privileges we have of hearing the sweet messages of the dear Comforters from time to time. We surely have had some wonderful spiritual feasts and seasons of sweet fellowship together when we have had the Comforters with us.

Would like very much to have you send us "Old Corn Gems." May the Lord continue to guide you, dear ones, in your efforts to serve Him. . With much Christian love, Minn.

Dear Brethren:

We have just had the great joy of having our dear Brother ——— here once again, and our class are very desirous of having another Comforter if it is at all possible. There are four places that could be taken in on this route.

We are all looking forward to our deliverance which we believe is very near now. The dear saints everywhere have our earnest prayers and we hope to meet them all soon beyond the veil. With much Christian love, Canada.

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

Greetings in His dear name!

Just to let you know how I appreciate this privilege of writing to the Stand Fast Bible Students. This privilege is growing more precious as the journey is nearing its end. So many are falling because of the roughness of the way. Praise God, that by His grace He has kept even me! standing in His strength alone, and He will keep and sustain His own even till the journey's end.

We are being served with precious food now through the "Old Corn Gems." Our Father does supply our need abundantly. I like that little Kernel in the "Gems," a definition of strength—"twisted together." ("One may have no strength at all but while twisted together with one that [illegible] infinite, the weakest shall not fail. Then with what [illegible]dence we may say, 'The Lord is the strength of my salvation.' ") Yes, He is my strength and my portion and *I know* nothing can intervene that will separate His love from me.

Our direct need of the whole armour of God is now. How precious the Truth. We have the Truth and we know we have the Truth, and we can go forth like Daniel, strong in the Lord, fully equipped with the Word.

I want you to know that I am a Stand Fast Bible Student—Standing by the Principles of Righteousness, thankful for the Comforters and the "Corn Gems."

We are glad, knowing we will soon be gathered Home. Then the trials of the road will seem nothing when we get to the end of the way.

No strength of our own, no goodness we claim
Our Trust is all thrown on Jesus' dear name.
In Him, our Strong Tower, for safety we hide,
The Lord is our power, the Lord will provide.

Pray for me. —Wis.

Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

Your very welcome and helpful letter of the 19th ult. duly received and much appreciated. We do thank our Heavenly Father continually for your labors of love—"Old Corn Gems." And we appreciate them so much. We are glad to know that *all* the dear family remaining, remember each other at the Throne of Grace. We always remember you—the Committee who have the work in charge, also the dear Comforters who have done so much for the Saints everywhere—in our prayers that all may abide under the Shadow of the Almighty and be faithful unto the end, and that we may soon all be gathered home with our dear Redeemer.

What joy and peace we get out of the study of His precious word, and of the "Studies in the Scriptures." We don't get as much time to study as we would like, but we get wonderful benefit from what time we can study.

What wonderful lessons the Lord is giving us through the "Old Corn Gems." They are indeed "meat in due season," and we pray that by the Lord's grace you may be able to continue these "Gems" for the benefit of the saints as long as possible.

We are so isolated here, seemingly, that we don't hear much about how the rest of the dear ones are getting along.

With much Christian love to *all* the dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord, we are, Bro. and Str.—Montana.

Happy would it be for all God's consecrated people, if with fixedness of purpose they would pay their vows unto the Most High. In his dealings with typical Israel we see that our God is a jealous God and that he desires whole-hearted devotion to himself. If we permit any rival to occupy the mind and heart that were solemnly consecrated to him alone, then we are unfaithful to him and wickedly despising our covenant. Let the language of every heart be, "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." —Z. '07:348.

OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER NINETEEN

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Our Lord Jesus' Inspiring Promise

"Be thou faithful unto death. and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10.

These are the words of our glorified Lord, given through St. John the Revelator on the Island of Patmos. This thrilling exhortation is given to the Church, to those who have entered into a special contract, a special covenant with the Lord. . . . .

It is required of these that they *continue to hold fast* the faith that first led them to make a consecration. They are to *continue* in this attitude through evil report and through good report, to follow their Leader "whithersoever He goeth." They must not faint before they reach the end of the journey. The world, the flesh and the Adversary will try to dissuade them and turn them back—try to cause them to think that the invitation they have received is an intangible, impossible thing.

A faithful servant is one who demonstrates himself worthy of his master's confidence, one who can always be relied upon. Daily we are proving our loyalty or our disloyalty. *"The Lord your God doth prove you."* He proves us to see if we are worthy—to see whether we love *Him* best or love *self* best, to see if our confidence in Him is such that we will lay aside everything else to win this great Prize which He has offered, to see whether we are following a mere temporary impulse, whether we are trying to grasp this beautiful thing, this Crown of Life, *without appreciation of its cost.*

In one of His parables, our Lord represents some who, when the sun of persecution arises, are not sufficiently loyal to the principles of righteousness, to STAND. They become offended. They wither away. So this word *faithful* seems particularly to signify *loyalty*, including also the thought of being *full of faith.* God's children are to be full of faith, and *those in whom God can have FAITH—those proving worthy of His entire confidence.*

Our Lord will say to such as are wholly faithful to the end of the race, "well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" These shall have "a Crown of Life." Their loyalty must be proved even unto death. This does not mean merely that they shall *die* as a consequence of their consecration to the Lord; for there will be two classes of those who thus die,—the Little Flock will die sacrificially, and the Great Company will die through "the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus."

"Unto death," therefore, would in this text mean *a faithfulness which would persist* until the sacrifice is finished in death, a faithfulness ready to encounter death at any moment, which would lead to the performance of the Covenant of Sacrifice even unto its consummation. . . . .

THE FADELESS CROWN OF LIFE

Each one who is victorious will receive a Crown of Life. It will not be a crown that will soon fade, or one that will last only a certain number of years, but a crown of *everlasting life.* And not only so, but the Lord shows us that this crown of everlasting life will be a crown of *superior life*—life on the *very highest plane.* Those who attain Restitution during the Millennial Age will have everlasting life on the human plane. The angels will have everlasting life on the spirit plane. But this *Crown of Life* given to the "more than conquerors" will be the very highest form of spirit life—immortality—far above all other planes of life, as the special reward for being victors in this race. "Let us so run that we may obtain." THE GOAL IS NEAR!

"Run on, my soul, undaunted,
Where duty shines before,
Though deserts blaze around thee
And Jordans surge and roar;
The land on this side Jordan
Is not thy birthright blest;
Speed on, and find thy Canaan
And enter into rest."

—Z. '16-189.

THE ELECT ARE UNCONDEMNED

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's *elect*"? (Rom. 8:33). The Apostle is here pointing out that although this called class accepted of God to be his elect, and to run with patience the race set before them, and make their calling and election sure, have weaknesses of the flesh, in the overcoming of which they, as new creatures, are not always wholly successful, nevertheless God looks upon the heart, and their judgment is not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, the will. Lest such should fear failure after all, he points out that in the great heavenly court there would be none to condemn them;—because God the judge who once condemned us in Adam has himself justified us in Christ,—accepting on behalf of the Adamic sin and the resultant weaknesses the sacrifice of Christ. He then points out that Satan our Adversary, will have no hearing before the heavenly Court, and that *there will be none to appear against us,* and that on the contrary our Lord and Master, who redeemed us with his precious blood, will be our Advocate. Who then could lay anything to the charge of God's elect?—those whom God has justified, whom God has called, whom God has accepted, and who, according to the divine arrangement, make their calling and election sure. Who would they be who could find fault with these whom God accepts on his own terms? Surely none! "Yea, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood!"—Z. '05:200.

There are some people whose characters are like putty; there are others in whom you can make a momentary dent, as in a rubber ball; still others are like diamonds. The class that are diamond-like have attained a firmness of texture, of character. If we put a number of balls of putty, a number of rubber balls and a number of diamonds into a pan and shake them well, the diamonds will scratch everything with which they come in contact, because they are so hard. The Lord is not looking for the rubber ball class now nor for the putty class.—Z. '12:98.

The hope of attaining the likeness of the Divine character is the great ambition which inspires us to faithfulness of endeavour.—Z. '12:337.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER NINETEEN

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT, HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL. Z. '18:51.

THE PRICE OF EXALTATION

"Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.—1 Peter 5:5, 6.

Who would dare, without Divine authorization, to entertain a hope of membership in the Royal Family of Heaven! Yet not only is this hope held out to some, but such is the positive promise of Jehovah to those who, having been called to that high position and begotten of the Holy Spirit of God, meet the requirements, continuing faithful unto death. The nearer we come to the time of exaltation, the greater is the thrill in contemplating the marvelous change.

The grave import of this hour will never be fully realized and appreciated until it is passed; indeed, *it cannot be.* For nearly nineteen hundred years the School of Christ has been in operation; and during this time God has been inviting some to enter this School, with the promise of full graduation and exaltation to those who truly learn the lessons that are therein taught. In times past some faithful ones have made progress in this School, have finished their course, have been approved, graduated, and set aside to await the coming of the Great King. Now He has come, and the Kingdom is being inaugurated. Many have already been exalted, while others are patiently waiting the day of their glorification. The latter must shortly finish their course. The time of the exaltation of the last members of the Body of Christ is drawing nigh; hence the importance of the words of St. Peter in our text. All truly consecrated desire exaltation; therefore the importance of learning well the rules that pertain to the Heavenly Way.

THE MAJESTY OF JEHOVAH GOD

True humility is that condition of mind or heart which causes one to have a proper appreciation of his own worth and the worth of others, and to realize the value to himself of the robe of Christ's righteousness. It is that condition of mind which impels one always to keep the Lord in view and himself out of sight. All who have the robe of Christ's righteousness received it only after a full consecration to give up self-will and to do the will of God. To continue in such a position of favor, one must continue to be submissive to the will of the Heavenly Father.

False humility is that condition of mind or heart which causes one to make an outward show of humility to the world; whereas in reality there is pride in his heart. *Some deceive themselves in this very respect.*

The hand is a symbol of power. In this text, the "Hand of God" symbolizes the mighty power of God, lovingly exercised in behalf of His children.

But why should any one humble himself? Is not every intelligent creature endowed with free moral agency, with the privilege of doing according to his own will? Even so! Is not the creature's will his chief asset? To this we also agree. Why, then, should we be asked to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God? Who is God that we should surrender our wills to Him? The correct answer to this question shows why it is for the best interests of each one to submit his will to the will of God, and walk humbly before Him.

The Scriptures answer that God is the great "First Cause" of all things, the "Eternal One," the "Immortal One." "Justice and Judgment are the habitation of His Throne." (Psalm 89:14.) He changes not; for He is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17.) He never fails in any of His good promises. All of His promises are good. All of His works are perfect.

His wisdom is perfect. He made the planets, the moon, the sun, the stars, and has so nicely balanced each one of these myriads of heavenly bodies that they move through space without noise or hindrance. Of Him the Prophet declares that He "measures the waters of the deep in His hand and metes out the heavens with the span; He comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; He takes counsel with no one, and no one instructs Him or shows Him what is understanding." (Isaiah 40:12-14.) When King David caught a slight glimpse of the creation of God, in worshipful adoration he exclaimed, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches!" (Psalm 104:24.) Jehovah God is so wise that He never makes a mistake. He cannot err. His will is always right and perfect.

The power of Jehovah is without limitation. We behold a mighty ship tossed by the raging waves of the sea, as though it were a little shell; and we marvel at the power exhibited. Then we are reminded that it was God who made the seas and shut the doors thereof, until in His own due time He was pleased to have the waters break forth from the heavens. "Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them. . . . . Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right hand." (Psalm 89:9, 13.) "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. . . . . All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity." —Isaiah 40:15, 17.

In the exercise of His power, according to His own good pleasure and in His own due time, God created the earth as a place for the habitation of His intelligent human creature, man. The angelic hosts of Heaven watch the progressive acts of the great Creator; and when He laid the foundations of the earth, a thrill of ecstasy pervaded Heaven, the Morning Stars sang together and all the sons of God (angels, cherubim and seraphim) shouted for joy.—Job 38:4-7.

Love finds a perfect expression in Jehovah! God *is* Love. His loving kindness goes out to all His creatures. Love is an unselfish desire to do good to others. The greatest expression of love is the putting of this desire in operation at great cost or sacrifice, for the benefit of others. The holy angels have experienced God's loving kindness. At great cost He manifested His love to man. He sacrificed the dearest treasure of His heart in providing for mankind redemption and an opportunity for everlasting life with abundant blessings to those who gladly humble themselves under His mighty hand.

Too wise to err, too good to be unkind, His power always put to a righteous use, His promises sure, without possibility of deviation therefrom, His will could be exercised only for the good of all His creatures. Why, then, should any intelligent creature in Heaven or in earth have any hesitancy in humbling himself under the mighty hand of God?

The answer to this question discloses two opposing forces which have always existed; namely, good and evil. Good has always been active, while evil became active only after the creation of man. The course of evil leads to debasement, degradation and death; while the course of good leads to life everlasting, exaltation and pleasures forevermore. Such are the fixed laws of Jehovah. All of God's intelligent creatures have been, or will be, given an opportunity to appreciate the outworkings of those laws. . . . .

NEW CREATION TESTED

Before the foundation of the world God ordained that Christ Jesus should have associated with Him 144,000 joint-heirs as His Bride, all composing the "New Creation." Each member of the New Creation will be like the Lord, its Head. This side the veil such are called to be footstep followers, to suffer as He suffered and to be tested as He was tested. (1 Peter 2:21; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:18.) The great Master said, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother."—Matt. 12:50.

One who is called to be the brother and joint-heir of Jesus is greatly honored. Now he is put on trial and must be judged according to the fixed rule of God. God's rules change not. If one is proud in heart, the Lord will bring him low. If he properly appreciates the honor granted to him and honestly desires to humble himself, and does humble himself under the mighty hand of God, the position of honor which he has received from the Lord really upholds him. "A man's pride shall bring him low, but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit." (Proverbs 29:23.) A striking example of this is shown in the Seventh Messenger to the Church. He was greatly honored of the Lord and his full appreciation of this honor made him more humble; and this humility of mind and spirit upheld him and made him strong.

Many ask, Why has not God destroyed the Devil long ago? The fact that He permits Satan to live and pursue his nefarious work is proof that He has some good and sufficient reason for so doing. Jehovah desires His intelligent creatures to learn the lesson that pride and ambition lead to suffering, sorrow and death, and that humility of mind and obedience to the Lord lead to life and exaltation. The Church, following in the footsteps of Christ Jesus, the Head, must be subjected to this great test in order to prove her loyalty and to demonstrate that Jehovah can trust her in the ages to come. To none other could He give the Divine nature.

Jehovah announced that the Seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head. (Gen. 3:15.) From then until now Satan has sought to destroy the Seed. . . . . Since Satan is the prince of devils, it follows that all the evil spirits are likewise bent on destroying the Seed, if possible . . . .

A CRUCIAL TEST AT HAND

That there will be a great conflict between the members of the New Creation this side the veil and the fallen angels, there can be little doubt. To know the will of God and to be submissive thereto is an absolutely certain protection; hence the importance of seeing what the test will involve. Where will be the battleground? Surely not in the hands, or feet, or ears! The Scriptures answer that the battleground is in the mind. "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5.) The mind of Jesus was to be fully submissive to the Father's will, humbling Himself under God's mighty hand. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. 12:2.) Thus the New Creature is developed.

Impressing upon the New Creation the importance of the prize and what to do to win it, St. Paul admonishes all, saying, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press forward along the mark for the prize." (Philippians 2:13, 14.) Surely the forgetting is with the mind, and likewise the contemplation of the glories before. Lucifer's sin was not what he did with his hands, *but in the meditations of his heart. Undoubtedly the mind is the battleground.* An *open* battleground is one where all obstructions are removed, that the contending forces may have free access. All along there have been obstructions which have prevented the evil spirits from attacking the New Creation; but it must be apparent that when they are loosed they will have more power than ever before. . . . .

PRIDE REMOVES ALL PROTECTION

Pride is an inordinate self-sufficiency or self-esteem, causing one to feel his own greatness and importance, and to lose sight of the greatness of Jehovah and of the Lord Jesus. The humble-minded one looks at himself soberly and realizes that whatever position he has the Lord placed him there; for "God hath set the members every one of them in the Body as it pleaseth Him." (1 Cor. 12:18.) He realizes that within himself there is no perfect thing; that God does not need him; and that the Lord Jesus would not continue to use him unless he walks humbly and looks unto Jesus, and not unto himself.

While it is true that the fallen angels will have greater freedom to attack the New Creature as we come nearer the end of the way, yet those who humbly obey the Lord will be granted a sufficient armor of protection that as valiant soldiers of the Cross they may fight a victorious battle against their enemies. (Ephesians 6:10-18; Psalm 91:1-7.) But suppose one who has been long in the narrow way becomes proud of mind and heart? Could he hope for such continued protection? The Apostle answers, "God resisteth the proud (*pushes them away from Him*), and shows His favor to the humble." *Thus we see that when one takes his mind off from the Lord, fills it with criticism and faultfinding of others, magnifies his own greatness and importance, and fails to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, he deprives himself of the protection the Lord has provided for his faithful ones.* It was pride that caused Lucifer to fall. It was pride, or lack of humility, that caused the angels to fall. It is pride, or lack of humility, that causes others to fall. Plainly is God's will expressed concerning pride and ambition thus: "But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate." "Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall." —James 4:6; Proverbs 8:13; 16:18.

DANGER TO THE NEW CREATION

Commenting upon the enemies of the New Creation, Brother Russell wrote (Z. '05;215): "God's people should beware of pride as they would avoid the most deadly plague. This rule, always good and well backed by Scripture, seems doubly needful to those who are blessed with the light of Present Truth. This may seem strange. It may be reasoned that the receiving of so much grander views of God's character and Plan would make His people feel the more insignificant and humble, the more dependent upon Divine guidance, the more trustful of God and the less trustful of themselves. And this should be the effect always and ever; but, alas, with very many this is not so. Many get to feel that the knowledge of the Plan of the Ages proves them especially wise or great or good. They seem to forget that God hides the Truth from the wise and great, that no flesh should glory in His sight. . . . . *Beware of all such people!* Sooner or later, unless they reform, they will fly the track entirely and injure more than they ever helped. God does not wish such people to serve His cause, and will surely permit their vanity to stumble them—however much their natural ability; and it is generally the people of real or fancied ability who are thus afflicted with the spirit of pride or vanity: 'God opposeth the proud, but showeth His favor to the humble.'"

Seeing, then, danger lurking in the pathway, and knowing that the enemy is on the alert to trip us up, what shall we do if we find that we are thinking too highly of self, if we have some ambition or pride in our heart, if we are not walking humbly before the Lord? The Apostle answers the question, "*Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.*" St. James states the same thing, saying, "Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh unto you." (James 4:7, 8.) Everyone in the narrow way needs the strength of the Lord manifested in his behalf. The proud or haughty or self-willed cannot hope for this favor; "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."—2 Chron. 16:9.

. . . .

THE TESTS FOR THE CHURCH ARE GREATER THAN FOR THE ANGELS

The angels were put to a great test, and many of them failed. The Church is being put to a far greater test; for God purposes to give the members thereof a greater reward. Such test of necessity entails much suffering. Important, then, is the question, How are we receiving these trials or tests? If we permit the fiery trials to stir up in our hearts malice, hatred, envy, ill-will, fault-finding, criticism and strife, this means that we are not humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God and learning the lessons as He would have us do (Proverbs 28:25.) On the contrary, if these fiery trials are burning away the dross and working out in us the sweetness of character like unto our Master—namely, gentleness, kindness, patience, long-suffering, tender-heartedness and love—this shows that we are humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God and profiting by it. Let each remember that since we are sons of God nothing can happen to us except by His permission, *and that these trials are evidences of our sonship.* (Herbrews 12: 5, 8.) Willingness to suffer special trials because of our loyalty to God, to the cause of righteousness and to the principles fo His government is evidence of exceptionally fine character. God is dealing with the New Creation with a view to perfecting their characters *to the very highest mark.* Z. '17-339-345.

"HELP FROM THE LORD"

Our text "MY HELP COMETH FROM THE LORD" (Psa. 121:2) is full of meaning from whatever standpoint considered. If we mistake not, the Lord's dear people never needed help more than at the present time. The difficulty with some, however, is that they do not realize their need. "When they are strong, then they are weak." "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." "Let us fear, lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."—Heb. 4:1.

The text reminds us further that those who need help and who realize it should look to the Lord for it—not relying upon their own strength or wisdom nor upon the assistance of their fellows. We are not to despise assistance from any quarter, but our chief reason for receiving any assistance should be our conviction that it has come from the Lord, whether through the ear or through the eye and the printed page or however. We are to remember that we are contending against a great Adversary and wily foe, and that we are not sufficient of ourselves to conquer, but that our only hope is in abiding in the Lord's love, by seeking to do those things which are pleasing to him and heeding the counsel of his Word and the leadings of his providence. A little carelessness along these lines, and the Adversary might readily entrap us and ensnare us and then lead us captive at his will. Ah, yes! we have the assurance of the Lord that there is but one place of safety at this time—into which more and more deeply we penetrate day by day. This place of safety is under the shadow of the Almighty, which figuratively signifies very close to the Lord. "No harm can come nigh that dwelling place," so far as the New Creature is concerned. Trials, tribulations, slanders may be exercised against us according to the flesh, but these cannot harm us as New Creatures, nor even disturb our peace of soul, while we are close to the Lord.

WE ARE NOT IGNORANT OF SATAN'S DEVICES

Recently we called attention to the fact that the evil spirits, the fallen angels, are to be permitted special liberties in this "evil day"; and that we might expect from them intrusions and deceptions from materializations. But while guarding that point we omitted to note another, perhaps equally dangerous, or more so, because more subtle. This we must consider now. Undoubtedly the fallen angels have had more or less power throughout the past, not merely to obsess or physically possess those who yield their wills, but power to measurably influence the minds of those who would resist them, and always by putting darkness for light. As a notable illustration of this, remember Judas, who, after brooding over the fact that our Lord's cause was not bringing him great honor and wealth, premeditated shaking matters up, incidentally gaining thirty pieces of silver, and arousing our Lord to practically assert himself and take a stand, in harmony with his power.

It was after this brooding that he was still further offended, while he ate at the Lord's table, and said "Is it I?" And when the Lord had intimated that it was he who would betray him, he became more determined to do so. We read, "Satan entered into him." His does not seem to be the case of obsession, but rather of domination of the mind. Satan, who had been striving to gain control, got the mastery when Judas was angry with the Lord's reference to him as a traitor.

Our thought is that the evil spirits have been restrained in considerable measure from intruding upon the minds of men. Otherwise the world would have become Bedlam long ago. *But our thought now is that their liberties with the saints will be increased, with a view to the closing test or decision in respect to character, which is now due.* "Judgment must begin at the house of God," but it is to extend in this hour of temptation or trial to "all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth." That which will begin with the Church will end with the world, producing the most awful state of affairs imaginable, "A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1.) This power of intrusion will contain, we believe, evil suggestions, promoting slanders and back-biting and temporarily, at least, derange the judgment and lead to violences of various kinds, of which the same person, under other circumstances and conditions would not have thought. In a word, the difficulty will be a dementia of passion, strife, hatred and *unreason.*

We see evidences along this line at the present time and it is our duty to sound the warning for the benefit of those not already so twisted as to be unable to appreciate the situation. Dear brethren, we cannot express to you our deep love for you all, and interest in your welfare.

After what we have witnessed of the power of evil operating in the minds of some and producing characteristics which the Apostle denominates "Works of the flesh and the devil," we can scarcely be surprised at anything which the Adversary might accomplish along these lines. But while we fear lest we should come under any such influence ourselves, and while we watch and pray lest we enter into temptation, we should not be cast down, nor hindered in any measure or degree, in respect to the service of our King. He is able and willing to keep in perfect peace those who are trusting in him, those who are following his leadings and coming close to him, even "under the shadow of the Almighty." The VOW has helped many to stand, thank God! And in proportion as it is taken, we believe that it will still further help. The words of the Apostle, "Who shall be able to stand in that evil day," never seemed more full of meaning to us than now, and never have we felt more than now our need of every piece of the Divine armor, and of every cord at our disposal to bind the sacrifice securely to the altar.

So then, while still expecting the attacks of the Adversary along the lines of materialization, hypnotism and occultism in general, *we perceive that from inoculation of our minds with evil surmisings*, saints have probably the most to dread. An important question is, How can we be on guard against this insidious snare? The reply is, By keeping very close to the Lord. *Apparently the least deviation from the principles of righteousness in our thoughts, the least violation of justice or love in our thoughts, would open the way for the enemy to inject poison, leaven, malice, envy, hatred and strife.*

We still urge the VOW as a great help in this time of stress. But do not forget that our help comes from the Lord and that the VOW is of assistance to us only as it helps us to approach near to him, and to abide in his love, and in harmony with his divine Word, in thought, in word, in deed. —Z. '09:13-15.

THE CHRIST PERFECTED BY SUFFERING

"Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are made partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."—1 Pet. 4:13.

It might at first seem strange to God's people that they should suffer special trials and difficulties as a result of becoming children of God and doers of that what is good. The natural expectation would be that he who *sins* shall suffer, and he who seeks to *avoid sin* shall be blessed. This is a natural law, and it will operate in due time—during the Millennial reign of our Lord. Evil-doers shall suffer stripes, and if found *persistent,* shall be cut off in the Second Death. But all well-doers shall be rewarded with everlasting life and blessing forever.

This is not true now, however, for the reign of the Prince of Righteousness has not yet begun. We are under the reign of the Prince of Darkness. And the evil-doers often have great success, while the right-doers suffer. David says of the wicked, "Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish." (Psa. 73:7.) Nevertheless he took his stand with those who would please God—and so also do we.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN TESTING US

St. Paul, speaking concerning the Church of the Gospel Age, says, *"All* that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.) There is *no exception* to this rule; and the knowledge and expectation of this should make us stand *fast,* having on the breastplate of righteousness, and having our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

God allows His people to have these experiences and to suffer for right-doing. In the present time He is calling out a saintly company. This company will be the Royal Priesthood of the future, to bless all the world during Messiah's Reign. And the Bible explains to us that these need trials to prove and test their characters.

God wishes to see how loyal we are to the principles of righteousness. How much are we willing to suffer? It is a saying with the world, "Every man has his price." And so in the Church there are some who would endure a certain amount, and then back down. Others will endure a little more, and others still a little more. The Lord declares that He is seeking those who will give up everything in order to prove faithful to their Covenant with Him. This faithfulness means entire loyalty to God, to His laws, which are the laws of righteousness.

THE FIRE TO BURN AMONGST YOU

The intimation that these fiery trials will try the Church, will burn amongst God's people, does not necessarily mean that *all* the fiery trials will come from the *Church;* but that these trials constitute a fire that is to do a purifying work amongst them, burning in their midst. It is an experience that must be endured *by each one individually.* It will be a general experience, because each one must have a share in this matter. It is not merely that the company as a whole will have opposition against them, but that *each individual* will be personally exposed to the fiery trials. Therefore this fire burns in our midst and will burn to the end.

It is a different kind of trial from what could come to any other body of people. The explanation of this difference is in our text—"inasmuch as we are made partakers of Christ's sufferings." When we know that each member of the Body of Christ must be tried, we can rejoice when some of this fire touches us. We say, "I am having a share in the sufferings of Christ. I am glad that in God's providence I have a share in these trials; for if I had no share in them, how could I know that I am one of the Body members?"

THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF TROUBLE

So we all rejoice, knowing that these fiery trials are of the Lord. Not that the Lord is the *cause* of these fiery trials; for usually it is the Adversary. But we have put ourselves into the Lord's hands, and He has promised to supervise all that concerns us. Therefore, whatever comes to us, we may be sure that it is of the Father's purpose, or permission for our good. If therefore, we recognize that this is something that the Lord's providence has arranged for us, it is all right, no matter how frequently we have to go the Throne of Grace for help in time of need.

God has revealed to us that He purposes to give to The Christ very great exaltation, great glory, honor and immortality. Therefore, we are looking forward to the time when this Body shall be perfected, and we shall share in the glory of our Head. When the glory shall be revealed, we shall be glad with a great joy! These trials that come to us are from a variety of sources. In our context thay are spoken of as the *one* trial of the Church, but that one trial is made up of a variety of experiences. If these difficulties and trials came all at once, they might be too severe for us. Therefore the Lord permits us to be taken out of the fire for a little while. "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."—Psa. 103:14.

TORTURES OF TODAY MORE REFINED

And so the Father has arranged that we shall have little seasons of refreshment between times, so that when the next trying experience comes, it will find us a little stronger and more ready to profit by it. Some of these trials come from the Adversary himself. Apparently the things that have been done to the Church could come from none other. Think of the devilish disposition manifested toward our Lord, and reflect upon his sufferings. We cannot think that mankind under any ordinary conditions could ever have had so malicious a spirit as that manifested against Him. The Devil had to do with all the wicked persecutions of the saints—the cutting out of tongues, the racking of their poor bodies, and the shooting out of *bitter words* from *the tongue.*

We are more used to this latter form of persecution today than in olden times; for the world—the average man—would not permit the things done in the Dark Ages. But the wicked feelings are still there—the animosity, the gall. As the Apostle James says, the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, and it sets on fire the course of nature. (James 3:6.) And so in our day the tongue and the pen are often used as weapons of evil. We have all noticed, perhaps, how willing the world is to *speak* evil and to *believe* evil—how willing to say that which they do not know. This is all because they are obsessed, besieged by the Adversary. But we are living in a more civilized day than were our brethern of the past. We think the individual who does these wicked things today—who slanders and vilifies God's people—is under some malevolent influence. And then the temptation comes to us to speak evil of them in return—to do all the harm we can against them. If we find this disposition to speak evil arising within us, we are to resist it, to allow the fire of this time to burn up these elements of our old nature. And the fire will have this purifying effect upon us, if we receive it aright, making us meet for the Heavenly Kingdom.

SECONDARY SOURCE OF TRIAL

Not only from the Adversary do these trials come, but they come from the weaknesses and the imperfections of others. And perhaps those that come from the brethern are the most difficult to bear. We know that "the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not." But when it comes to those who have made a profession of loyalty to God, and who have named the name of Christ, whether they be Presbyterians or Episcopalians, Baptists or Congregationalists, OR THOSE WHO ARE BIBLE STUDENTS—if in any of these we find the persecuting spirit, we are more discouraged and less likely to have the proper sympathy for them.

We are to remember, however, that nothing can happen to us unless the Father permits it. If we did not get the trials from Methodists or Presbyterians or BIBLE STUDENTS, we would get them from somewhere else, in order to burn up our dross and strengthen the elements of our character which needs development. We are to take all of these things patiently, knowing that they are working out for us a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We are to look away from these things and to recognize the great purpose of God. We are to reflect that this is the way in which God is chiseling us and polishing us to make us ready for the grand Temple of Glory. And when we think of this, we can look with fortitude and patience on these fiery trials, recognizing that we shall get a blessing out of them.

"Through many a thorny path He leads
My tired feet;
Through many a path of tears I go,
But it is sweet
To know that He is close to me—
My God, my Guide;
He leadeth me, and so I walk
Quite satisfied."

Thus we learn as people of God to *glory.* We may glory in all the things which He has done *for us* and *in us.* The things that naturally would be least likely to be gloried in are tribulations, persecutions. But we may glory also in these. We may rejoice in them—not that we enjoy the tribulations, the persecutions, but we realize that these are working for us characters pleasing to God. *The Lord will see to it that we get enough, and not too much, tribulation.*

The word *tribulation* has the thought of serious trouble—a combination of troubles that makes the experiences serious. It would not mean that we would fall into some difficulty and soon get out of it again, but it would mean severe and continued trouble. Sometimes we cannot see why we have the troubles that come to us. They may come in the form of sickness, or death, or financial trouble, or humiliation of our unrecognized pride and self-love; or we may have a combination of trouble. There is no difference whether it is one kind or another—they are *tribulations.* But it is for us to recognize that in all these trials the Lord supervises and makes them work for our good.

The *world* has persecutions of a certain sort. People in business will sometimes persecute one another. Sometimes persecutions are in a political way. The Lord indicates to the Church that we may rejoice in any persecution, especially if we are in no way *blame-worthy.* "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed (feel disgraced)," said the Apostle. (1 Pet. 4:14-16). He is suffering because the "darkness hateth the light," and slanders the Truth. This has been so from Jesus' time all the way down.

BLESSING RESULTING FROM PERSECUTION

Shall we say that we will not be reconciled to any certain experience? No; we have committed all to the Lord, and it is for us to bow in full submission, knowing by faith and from the assurance of God's Word that all things are working together for good to us. No matter what the trouble may be, it will bring patience if we are rightly exercised. Some of the Lord's people may have patience well developed, and thus not need so many of these experiences. But whatever we *need*, we should desire.

We remind you again of the story of a certain brother who took account of his qualities, and decided that he was most lacking in *patience*. Then he prayed most earnest to the Lord to give him more patience. He kept on praying; and the more he prayed, the more difficulties he seemed to have, the greater trials of patience. Then it occurred to him that this was the answer to his prayer; for that was the way to get patience. And when he began to see the matter aright, it encouraged him and made a great change. He saw that the Lord was answering his prayer by giving him the very experiences he needed to develop in his character this grace of the Spirit.

"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." This does not mean that we get all of our patience first, then all of our experience, and then all of our hope; but that they are all developing together. We have a good courage and are desirous of pleasing the Lord; we are not ashamed to be His children. And the reason why we are not ashamed is that with this hope, we have the realization of God's love; and we are able to say, "If I had *tribulation*, I now have more *hope* and more *patience*. I am getting the results in these tribulations, in the fruits of the Spirit." WHOEVER ESCAPES EXPERIENCES THAT WOULD DEVELOP THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NEVER GAIN A PLACE IN THE KINGDOM.

Patience can be gained *only by trials*. Faith can be developed *only by necessities*. We have need of preparation for our future work. This can be gained only by those experiences which will touch us with a feeling of the infirmities and difficulties and trials of the groaning creation to whom we shall be ministers and representatives when we reach the Throne. For us, then, the lesson of present experiences is to resist evil; not with evil, but with *good*. "Be not overcome of evil; but resist evil with good."—Romans 12:21.—Z. '15:297-299.

PERSECUTION AND FIERY TRIALS THE CHRISTIANS EXPERIENCE

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."—2 Tim. 3:12.

Godliness implies a character which is actuated by principles of righteousness. In all our dealings we are either just or unjust, kind or unkind, not according to what some people may think of us, but according to the standard of righteousness found in the Scriptures. Therefore, in order to develop that character which is pleasing to God, we should in every detail of life consider carefully what is right and what is wrong, according to that standard. This course is Scripturally termed meditating in God's Law. When we reach that development of character in which thought, word and deed are measured by the principles of righteousness, we shall have attained godlikeness.—Psa. 119:97.

What the Lord desires to see in His people is not merely an outward manifestation of devotion to Him and to His brethern, but a development of love in our hearts and our dispositions. If we profess to love one another and yet pursue a course of self-seeking, wherein do we manifest love? So St. John admonishes to love not in word only, but in deed and in truth.—1 John 3:18.

Primarily, the godly are those who are in Christ Jesus, members of His Mystical Body, having presented their human bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God through the merit of the great Advocate. Secondly, the term godly includes those who live righteously, in sympathy with Christ Jesus, even though they may not live up to the full standard which the Lord has set, because they shrink from the suffering that results from godly living, Thirdly, the term godly includes some in the remote past, who, believing in the promise of the Lord that the "Seed" should some day come, separated themselves froom the rest of the world and, having obtained new aims, new ideas, were out of touch with the remander of the race because of having a different standard. Heb. 11:13-16.

The Ancient Worthies composed this third class, who had a share in the suffering of the godly and a participation also in the blessing. Moses, for example, preferred to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to participate in the honors of the Egyptian Government. Although adopted into the family of Pharaoh, he had respect to the promise that the Messiah would come. Hence he suffered on account of his faith in the promise. So all the patriarchs desired to be in harmony with God, in accordance with His promise made to Abraham, and because of belief in that promise they suffered more or less persecution.—Heb. 11:24-26; 36-38.

Some one may ask, "Why should the godly suffer?" The Bible answers that sin has brought the world into opposition to God Whoever, then, would have all men speak in commendation of him would not be in harmony with the Divine arrangement, for the masses of the world are pursuing a course that the Lord does not approve. We are not saying that everything which the world does is sinful, but that the standards of God are so high that because of their fallen condition the masses of the world are not subject to the Law of God, neither, indeed, can they be, for they are carnal, sold under sin.(Rom. 8:7; 7:15, 15.) Those who wish to have influence with the world must cater to popular prejudices. On the contrary, those who would be God's people must be loyal to the principles of righteousness and consequently must go in the opposite direction to that of the world. Hence they are opposed by the world.

From the standpoint of God the course of the world is sinful. There is a tendency in our flesh to go with the world, who are laboring under false views of various kinds, because that course is in sympathy with the desires of our own fallen flesh. Hence to live godly is to live in opposition to the course of the world and of our own flesh. This would include not only living uprightly and avoiding sin, etc., but also the making of sacrifices as well, where principles are not involved. We are to beware, however, lest we be deceived along this line. Not only are we contending with the world, but we are wrestling with wicked spirits in high positions.—Eph. 6:12.

ILLUSTRATION OF SATAN'S DEVICES

Sometimes Satan's arts seem to be employed to get those who are trying to live godly into contention with each other. One of his devices is to make unimportant things seem important, and in this way to make people think that they are contending for righteousness' sake, and that the sufferings that they bring on themselves in this manner are for righteousness sake. Another device is to deceive people into "busy-bodying in other men's matters." (1 Peter 4:15.) It behooves us, therefore, as the Lord's people, not to try to straighten out all the affairs of the Church or of the world, and not to get into conflict with the brethren. They, like ourselves, are laboring to counteract the influences of the world, and flesh and the Devil.

Our influence upon each other should be uplifting; we should not cause others to grieve, except where suffering is absolutely necessary. Hence the Lord's people should cultivate the fruits of the Spirit increasingly—meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness, love. The cultivation of these fruits of the Spirit is a law in respect to the Lord's people. All who would live godly in Christ Jesus are to see to it that they are not the *cause of suffering* to others—especially to those of the household of faith.

SUFFERING AS A CHRISTIAN

While it is true that all who will live godly in this world will suffer to the extent to which they are out of harmony with the present evil conditions, yet the promised blessings of the Scriptures are to those who live godly *in Christ Jesus,* those who are *Christians.* Of these St. Peter says, "If any man suffer *as a Christian*, let him not be ashamed."—1 Pet. 4:16.

A Christian is a follower of Christ, one who has cast in his lot to suffer with Christ, that He may be also glorified with the Lord. (2 Tim. 2:12.) From the Apostle's standpoint, therefore, no one could *suffer* as a Christian unless he had become a Christian.

Every painful experience which our Lord had was suffering for righteousness' sake—not only the great sufferings, not only the great fight against sin, but also all the little, unpleasant experiences common to the world. Being "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26), there was no reason why He should suffer. We do not understand that the Heavenly Father has provided sufferings, trials and difficulties for the angels who are in harmony with Him. Nor do we think that Jesus, being a Son in full accord with the Father, would have suffered were it not for His Covenant of self-sacrifices. All of His sufferings were because He had come into the world to be man's Redeemer. They were all parts of His necessary experience.

The sufferings which our Lord endured were the result of His activity in the service of the Father. These were His weariness, His weakness after giving out His vitality to heal others, His bloody sweat, His ignominous buffetings, and all the reproaches, the sneers and the bitter words incurred on account of His faithfulness, to all of which He meekly and quietly submitted until His sufferings on Calvary terminated His human existence.

SUFFERINGS RESULTING FROM HEREDITY, NOT SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

There is no question that suffering in general is not suffering with Christ, but with Adam. Our physicial infirmities which are of heredity, are not sufferings of Christ. Rather we should speak of the sufferings of Christ as being *voluntary* and not involuntary. When the Apostle says that if we suffer with the Lord we shall also reign with Him (2 Tim. 2:12), he means the suffering which we bring on ourselves through faithfulness to our Covenant. St. Paul speaks of filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church. (Col. 1:24.) These experiences are not for Adam's sake.

In St. Paul's own case he had, we believe, weak eyes as a result of his wrong course in persecuting the Church; and that wrong course was, no doubt, largely the result of heredity. When the Apostle speaks of the sufferings he endured on account of his eyes, he does not speak of them as the sufferings of Christ, but says that his affliction was a messenger of *Satan* to buffet him. (2 Cor. 12:7.) We might then say that all physical sufferings resulting from heredity are ministers of Satan opposing us, causing us much difficulty. However, we believe that the Lord is pleased with us if we resist these ministers of Satan.

If we should think of all our physical pains and aches as sufferings for Christ, then we should be obliged to think of our mental defects also as sufferings for Christ. For instance, a man who had a disabled hand might have a comparatively even temper; another might have a perverse temper, leading him into trouble, leading him to busybody in other men's matters, etc. Thus his disposition causes him to suffer as a *busybody* and not for Christ. St. Paul tells us that our defects in character are works of the fallen flesh. (Gal. 5; 19-21.) If the sufferings that come to us because of imperfect mental conditions are sufferings of heredity, the physicial sufferings which result from imperfect physical conditions, cannot be counted as sufferings for Christ.

In the case of a Christian, inherited weaknesses and those brought upon himself by the violation of the laws of God previous to his entrance into the family of God as a son, while not sufferings with Christ, will be made advantageous to him. These weakneses our Father sees fit to leave with us, but assures us that His grace will be sufficient for us. (2 Cor. 12:9.) While the realization of such care for our interests is humiliating in that it forces conviction of our weakness, yet it is refreshing and inspiring in that it proves our Father's love for us. "The Father Himself loveth you." —John 16-27.

SUFFERING TURNED TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW CREATURE

But when one has undertaken to follow in the footsteps of Christ and has been begotten as a New Creature, whatever affliction that *New Creature* undergoes because of following the Lord, is suffering as a Christian; and whatever our experiences in suffering may be, these are not necessarily the portion of the sons of God, for the angels do not suffer; but He permits the Church to have them in order to develop and crystallize character. If we rejoice that we are found worthy to share in the sufferings of the present time, every trial will be turned to advantage as a part of our Christian experience. "They are not of the world." (John 17:6.) Therefore all of our experiences must be regarded as Christian, for correction in righteousness and for educational purposes.

But this is taking a deeper view than ordinary. Certainly a Christian is not to be ashamed of what he may suffer because of his loyalty to the Lord, to the Truth and to the brethern. *In these sufferings he is to glorify God and to be thankful for them. He is to be glad for the opportunity of enduring something, to show not only the Lord, but himself also that he has endured somehting for Christ's sake.* Every sacrifice that we make is for the purpose of suffering as a Christian, and we are not to be ashamed so to suffer.—1 Peter 4:16. . . . .

SHRINKING BACK FROM SUFFERING

Our Lord forewarns us that in the end of the Gospel Age, many who have a love for Christ will allow their love to grow cold because of the iniquity and sin in the world. (Matt. 24:12.) It will be a test for such to decide whether they will follow the Lord in self-sacrifice as His disciples or whether they will partake of the worldly spirit. WE SEE THIS TEST IN OPERATION NOW. A great many people who name the name of Christ, who really love the Lord, who appreciate much of His character, who would like to see the right prosper, nevertheless have no thought of making a spectacle of themselves before men. They would like to do right, to walk honorably, and to have the favor of men as good citizens. But as to being warm and faithful followers of the Lord—through "evil report and good report" (2 Cor. 6:8)—their faith and zeal are not sufficient to endure the test.

The Lord Jesus gives us the invitation to become joint-heirs with Him He has very clearly informed us that to follow in His steps will mean trials and difficulties in the flesh. He says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." (John 16:33.) St. Paul repeats the sentiment, saying, "We must through much tribulations enter into the Kingdom of God;" and again in our text he emphasizes the thought, saying, "Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus *shall suffer persecution.*" (Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12.) ***There is no other way to enter the Kingdom than by self-sacrifice, deadening of the flesh, mortifying it.*** In proportion as the New Creature grows the Old Creature perishes, until the sacrifice shall have been completed in death. . . . .

TRIALS FROM FALSE BRETHREN

The Scriptures plainly teach that special trials may be expected in the Church, amongst the brethern. And we find it to be true that our severest trials come not from without, but, as the Apostle in substance says, "From among yourselves shall arise false brethern," to injure the flock in general through personal ambition. (Acts 20: 30.) This becomes a test not only to the Church, but to all those who are in contact with us, for if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it."—1 Cor. 12:26.

We are not, therefore, to think it strange if there are trials and difficulties, and if more or less dispute arise in the Church. We are to cultivate gentleness, meekness, patience, loving-kindness toward all. Nevertheless, if a dispute arises amongst the Lord's people, we are to recognize that such things are unavoidable amongst those who have the Truth. Our heads are imperfect, and consequently it requires some time to come into line with the teachings of the Lord's Word. Even disputation makes life an activity, and is better than a dead condition—not to care what is spoken or not spoken. Nevertheless, those who have zeal should be careful that they manifest the Spirit of the Lord, as above indicated—gentleness, patience, meekness, brotherly kindness, love, humility.

Think it not strange that there are fiery trials *amongst yourselves,* arising from one cause or another, that will make it particularly severe for you. Those among whom you are thrown in contact will cause you suffering, because of your zeal and their misunderstanding, their imperfections, etc. Similarly, you may be a cause of trial to others. All of these fiery trials will work out good for you. ***It is far better to be amongst those who are fervent in spirit than to take a place amongst those who are lukewarm and thus lose the privilege of being one of those who are footstep followers of Christ.*** Perhaps those who are lukewarm will, in the Time of Trouble, learn a lesson. But the Little Flock are to learn their lesson in the present time—allowing the experiences of life to work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—2 Cor. 4:17.

Our knowledge of God is limited; yet it is only what we should expect of the Heavenly Father, that any whom He accepts as His children will have Divine love and care in the supervision of their affairs, which will make all things work for good to them. Since the Lord is our Shepherd, no one is able to pluck us out of His hands. (John 10:28, 29.) We are as dear to Him as the apple of His eye. He that began a good work in us is able to complete it in the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:6). So the more faith we have the more we appreciate the text, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) This includes even the things that seem to be very contrary, very evil, very disadvantageous.

Our Lord said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." (John 17:3.) To know the Father means to be in fellowship with Him, to have an intimate acquaintance with Him. Experience corroborates this fact. The more obedient we are as children the more intimate is our acquaintance with Him. And if we are unfaithful, even for a little space, we shall fail to make development along spiritual lines. But in proportion as we are seeking to walk in His ways, we become intimate with Him in the particular sense in which a child knows his father. This knowledge gives us the trust that He cares for us as His children, and makes all things work together for good to us.—Rom. 8:28; 1 John 1:6,7.

CO-OPERATION WITH GOD TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY

We note, however, that St. Paul says that all things work together for *good*, not for *best.* God has something to do in the way of His choice of His reward and of our possibilities. The angels of God, however obedient to Him, could not become archangels nor cherubim. Their obedience brings their highest welfare on their own plane. So with us, We cannot get the best for the reason that He has already given it to Jesus Christ, whom He has set next to Himself at His right hand in power and glory and honor.—1 Peter 3:22.

Again, this promise is not a guarantee that all things in life will work together for the very best to us as though we had neither will nor choice in the matter. We should not say, "I positively resign myself; the Lord has said that all things will work together for the best, and if I miss opportunities in the service I shall say, 'Oh, well, it is all for the best.'" Thus to think would be a mistake, for it is evidently not at all the thought.

After we have become New Creatures in Christ and children of God, He leaves us with a certain amount of choice. It is very largely in our own control what we shall do, whether we shall make progress or stand still or go backward. We cannot say that if one had lost the High Calling his experiences would be the very best possible; and that if he went into the Second Death, his fate was the best. But we can say that this Scripture means that God stands ready to give us the best that He may have under the terms and conditions of the Covenant which He has made with us.

Ours is a Covenant of sacrifice. There are certain laws and principles which are not to be broken. Along these lines the Lord Jesus tells us that the Father will appoint those next to the Lord who have demonstrated most of the Spirit of the Redeemer. He will not put anyone in such a position or into the Kingdom arbitrarily. His character, His Words, stand pledged that He will make the best of us that He is able to do, while at the same time recognizing our wills as paramount.

Jehovah does not seek those as His children who need to be forced. Our Lord said that the Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23.) We are to work to the best of our ability. But with all of our stumbling the Lord stands pledged that He will not leave us if we are faithful, and that He will make even our stumbling work out for good to us. Those who lose the crown may come up through great tribulation with the Great Company class. This is the best thing possible for them under the Divine arrangement. For those who go into the Second Death, their fate will not be the best for *them;* but it will be best for the entire universe that those should be blotted out of existence who are out of harmony with righteousness.—Z. '12-323-326.

THE GRACE OF HUMILITY

"In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."—Phil. 2:3.

Those who naturally have a humble mind have no particular difficulty in esteeming others better than themselves. But there are some who naturally have another attitude of mind. This is not necessarily their fault, for they may have been born with larger self-conceit than were others. But even if we were born with humbleness of mind, we should need to take care that selfconceit and pride do not come in. Sometimes in their own heart some people feel boastful of the knowledge they possess. They like to shine, even though they know they have no more brilliancy than others; they would like to obscure the shining of others that they might be the more noticed in the darkness.

It would, therefore, be a safe matter for each of us to follow the Apostle's suggestion to cultivate this *humility of mind* and never allow it to be lost. "*Humble yourselves,* therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that *He may exalt you in due time;* "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (1 Pet. 5:6; Luke 14:11) God would do this abasing, not of a vengeful spirit, but because the one who would flaunt himself must be brought low.

There might, however, be circumstances when some who appear to be vaunting themselves really are not doing so, but circumstances and conditions make it *seem* so. Therefore, to best fulfil the Apostle's injunction, we should, as he suggests in this text, cultivate the spirit of humility—not considering our own qualities so much as those of others. If we have good qualities, we are glad; let us make use of them.

In comparing ourselves with others, let us look at our own blemishes. There are very few in whom we cannot see some good qualities, good traits. If, therefore, we look at our own imperfections and the good qualities of others, we shall find ourselves more and more appreciative of others; and this will be of assistance to us in running the race.

As an illustration of seeing something to admire, even in our enemies, we have the suggestion of the old lady to her nieces. One niece said to the other, "Auntie can say something good about everybody. I believe she could say something good even about the Devil." "That is so," answered the other. "Let us ask her." Then she called, "Auntie, is there any good about the Devil?" "My dear," replied Auntie, "I wish we all had as much perseverance as he has."

So if we could find something in the Adversary that we could admire and commend, we can certainly find something in all others to admire and commend and to give them credit for. Thus we will cultivate the spirit that will be most helpful to ourselves for our future work.

The consideration of our own imperfections would, as we have suggested, make us very humble of mind and keep us in a very humble attitude of mind. This might discourage us unless we had the proper relationship with the Lord and His Word. We know that "all things work together for good to those who love God." (Rom. 8:28) Through His Word our Lord has provided for such the "Balm of Gilead" for their encouragement and the anointing oil and the comfort of the Scriptures.

The Lord does not cast us off if we are not wilfully wrongdoers and if we take in the right spirit the humiliating things. That disposition is what He wants. Those things which would humiliate us in the sight of others and in the sight of the Lord Himself, will, if we are rightly exercised by them, work together for good to us. Such He will bless and lift up and give an appreciation of His love. This He purposes to do. We have every evidence that the Lord will give the necessary encouragement, and we have the assurance of the Scriptures that those who obey His Word to the *best of their ability* shall not be overcome..

For each one to look merely upon his own things, interests, welfare or talents and to ignore those of others would manifest a general selfishness and, consequently, a dearth of the Spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of love and generosity. In proportion as we are filled more and more with the Holy Spirit, Love, we shall find ourselves *interested in the welfare of others.* This was the mind, disposition, or spirit which was in our dear Redeemer, which He so wonderfully manifested, which we must copy and develop in our characters if we would ultimately be of the "little flock" who shall be joint-heirs with Christ in His glory, concerning whom God has predestinated that to be accepted with Him to this position they must be "copies of His Son." Rom. 8: 29.

OUR GREAT EXEMPLAR

That we may partially discern how our Lord Jesus exemplified this spirit of humility, the Apostle briefly sums up the story of His humiliation and shows how it led to His present exaltation. He points out to us that when our Lord Jesus was a spirit being, before He stooped to take our nature and to bear the penalty of our sin, He was in "a form of God"—a spirit form, a high and glorious condition But instead of being moved selfishly and ambitiously to grasp for higher things than God had conferred upon Him —instead of seeking to set up a rival Empire, as Satan did—He did not meditate a *robbery of God* to make Himself the Father's *equal* (Satan's course), and say "I will ascend above the stars (the bright ones, the angelic hosts), I will be *as* the Most High" (His peer, His equal). Quite to the contrary of this, our Lord Jesus, "the beginning of the creation of God," was willing, in harmony with the Father's plan, to *humble* Himself, to take a *lower* nature and to do a work which would involve, not only a great deal of humiliation, but also a great deal of pain and suffering.

The Apostle points out how the "Only Begotten" proved His willingness and humility by complying with this arrangement: and that after He became a man He continued of this same humble spirit, willing to carry out the Divine Plan to the *very letter* by dying as man's ransom price; and not only so, but when it pleased the Father to require that the death should be a most ignominious one in every respect, perhaps beyond the requirements of the ransom merely, He did not draw back, but said, "*Thy will, not Mine, be done,*" and stooped even to the ignominious "death of the cross!"

Here we have the *most wonderful demonstration of humility, meekness and obedience to God that ever was manifested or that could be conceived of.* And this is the pattern the Apostle points out that *we* should seek to copy. "Let this same (humble) mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2:5-10.

This humility enabled our Lord to render perfect obedience, on acount of which the Heavenly Father has so highly honored Him as to raise Him from the dead to the divine nature, to a station far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named. That this is the Apostle's argument is shown (verse 9) by the word "*wherefore*"; i. e., on this account, on account of this humility just described, God has highly exalted Him.

Not only did our Lord's beautiful and perfect humility and obedience demonstrate that He was *to the core* loyal to the Heavenly Father, but it also demonstrated that in Him the Father's spirit, Love, dwelt richly, for He shared the Father's love for the race He redeems. On this account also He is found worthy to be the Divine Agent in the blessing of all the families of the earth, according to the terms of the Divine Covenant made with Father Abraham.

Thus He has become the "Seed of Abraham" which is to bless the race redeemed; and hence it will be to Him that "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess" when Jehovah's "due time" shall come for the pouring out of Divine blessings upon the redeemed world—that all may come to a knowledge of the truth and, if they will, into full harmony with God, and to eternal life.

Not only does the Apostle hold up the Lord Jesus as the great Example of a proper humility, self-abnegation and obedience to God in the interest of others, but he would also hold up before us the reward, the high exaltation of our Lord by the Father, the result or reward of His obedience, that we also might be encouraged and realize that, if faithful in following the footsteps of our Redeemer and sacrificing the advantages of the present to serve the Lord and His cause, then in due time we also may expect to be glorified with Him and to share His name and throne and work, as members of His anointed Body, His Church, His joint-heir.

Beloved, let us apply to ourselves the loving exhortation of the Apostle to the Church at Philippi, contained in the succeeding verses: (Phil. 2: 12-16 "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.") and continue in the way upon which we have entered, making more and more progress in the race-course, working out in ourselves through humility and obedience the character, the disposition of Christ, with fear and trembling, and thus working out each *our own share* in the great salvation to glory, honor and immortality which God hath promised.

WORKING OUR SALVATION

We cannot work out our own *justification*, but being justified by the blood of Christ, and being called with the heavenly calling, we can make our calling and election *sure*. We can work out our own share in the great salvation to which we have been called in Christ by giving heed to the instructions of the Lord, by following the pattern which He has set for us; not that we shall attain perfection in the flesh, but merely perfection of will, of intention, of heart, and if we keep the body under to the extent of our ability, its weaknesses and imperfections will be reckoned as covered by the merit of our Lord, the Holy One.

It is encouraging also for us to know that this warfare against weakness and sin is not merely one of *our* [illegible] but that God is for us, has called us, and is helping us. He already works in us, by His word of promise, and has led us thus far in the willing and the doing of His will, His good pleasure; and He will continue thus to lead and to help us and work in us by His Word of Truth, *if we will continue to give heed to His counsel.* "Sanctify them through Thy Truth—Thy Word is Truth." The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" to every one that so accepts it; and no greater stimulus to true godliness can be found than the "exceeding great and precious promises given unto us; that *by these* ye might be partakers of the divine nature." 2 Pet 1:4.

Moreover, in following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus, running the race for the great prize set before us in the Gospel, we are not to *murmur* by the way, *finding fault with its difficulties, and narrowness;* nor are we to dispute respecting it, nor seek to have any other way than that which Divine providence marks out for us, realizing that the Lord knows exactly what experiences are necessary to our development in the school of Christ; and realizing also that, if obedience were possible, while our mouths are full of complaints, and dissatisfaction with the Lord and our lot which He has permitted it would indicate that we are at least out of sympathy with the *spirit* of His arrangement; and such an obedience, if it were possible (but *it would not be possible*), would not meet the Divine approval, nor gain us the "prize." Hence, as the Apostle exhorts, we should "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, ... holding forth the Word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Verses 14-16. —Z. '11:440, 441.

BEWARE OF PRIDE IN THE HEART

"Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord."—Prov. 16:5.

Pride is very deceitful and frequently cloaks or covers itself with humility. Because of our own imperfections it is well for us not to become *judges* of others, but merely limit our judgment to the outward manifestations. The Lord says, "By their *fruits* ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20.) *We are to judge the outward conduct, but we cannot go beyond and say what is of the heart.* Errors of judgment are not an abomination to the Lord. He may look upon mistakes with sympathetic eyes. People are not responsible for those qualities which have come down to them by inheritance. Without judging individuals we may see certain conduct sometimes which may seem to be pride, yet is not pride.

We have seen people who have a great lack of self-esteem, a great lack of vanity, but who may have large approbativeness. They do not think so much of themselves as they wish others to think of them. They say, "If people knew me as I know myself, I would simply be a cypher in the world." There is a certain amount of truth in this. People with small self-esteem are often taken to be proud, when it is really not the case. In trying to look as though they were somebody they will carry themselves as though they thought they were everybody. Such persons are simply laboring in an unfavorable condition in which they were born. We cannot think that the Lord would abominate them. They are very often little to themselves and very humble with the Lord. Yet they try to make themselves appear in as favorable a manner as possible. We must admit that there is a propriety in this to a certain extent. It is wise for them to try to overcome their weaknesses of nature. They should try to think soberly of themselves (that is, to be of a sound mind,) and they should try not to overdo matters. They must act with meekness, as well as feel and think meekly.

There is another class who have a large amount of self-esteem, yet who think, "I do not wish others to know that I have this high opinion of myself, therefore I will cloak it. It will endeavor to speak very humbly. The Scriptures say that we should be humble, therefore when I speak of anything I will try to speak from this standpoint." Such people very frequently get a gloss of humility of an *outward* ind. Some people really think that this course is right. f they are sincere in their conduct, we cannot suppose that he Lord would abhor them.

Our thought, then, is that in this text "The proud in heart" re the haughty-minded—those who feel haughty toward ighly than they ought to think, who despise others. The eart of such a one is not that which God could love or hat anyone could love; it is *an abomination in the Lord's ight.*

WHY PRIDE IS AN ABOMINABLE TRAIT

abomination is that which is extremely displeasing —that which is repulsive—that which a person should not ish to entertain—should not harbor—must reprove. There *ust be some reason* why God declares Himself thus in pposition to pride. We perceive that no one really has anything whereof to be proud. As the Apostle suggests in one place (1 Cor. 4:7), "What hast thou that thou didst not eceive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory s if thou hadst not received it?" What have we that we ave not received of the Lord? If whatever we have received s a gift, where is our right to be proud of it? Evidently uch would be a very wrong condition of mind to be in—to proud of things not our own, not of ourselves, but a gift. ift.

There is, therefore no reason for any to be proud; but here is every reason to be thankful to the Great Giver f all good. And that which is true of us is true also of the ngels. Hence, there is nothing in all the Universe for any f God's creatures to be proud of. Whatever conditions they re in are not of themselves. God seems to have arranged he conditions for humility, so that there could be *no ground* or pride.

Pride is merely selfishness, self-laudation; and selfishness is another name for sin. Sin and selfishness, therefore, re in opposition to the Divine Character and the Divine Plan—totally in opposition to it. It is, therefore, the right nd proper thing that God should have the proud in detestation. Not having used His blessings aright, they could not ave His favor. Whether they be proud of mental attainments, proud of physical strength, proud of wealth or ancestry, or proud that their "ancestors were monkeys," matters ot. It is all pride, and an abomination to the Lord.

THE MOST DETESTABLE FORM OF PRIDE

But evidently the most detestable form of pride is *pride the Church*—as though we had made the Plan and could oast in it! We do, indeed, see that anyone making the Plan might justly feel proud of it. But when we remember that none of us made the Plan, but that we are privileged o see it, we should be filled the more with humility and should try day by day to better glorify His Name for the blessings which He has provided for the whole world.

We cannot suppose that any kind of pride would be more detestable in God's sight than pride of the Truth. If anyone should continue in such a course, manifestly it would lead him out of the light. We see this principle illustrated well in the case of Satan. Noble, grand, he allowed pride to enter his heart and said, "I will ascend above the others; I will have *an empire of my own.*" And this pride made him the opponent of God. (Isa. 14:12-17.) He is known in the Scriptures as the Adversary, Satan, the Devil.

All those who have the spirit of pride fail to recognize that "every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of Lights." (Jas. 1:17.) Every such one, therefore, has the spirit of the Adversary instead of the Spirit of God. If it be allowed to grow and bring forth fruit, it will lead eventually to the Second Death. *It is appalling to see the nature of the temptations that come to God's people!* But we are not to judge their hearts, to determine whether it is a pride of heart or not; for it may be merely a deception for a time. And even though they may miss the "high calling," they may beg a place in the "great company." And when we see that the conduct is not at all in accord with what we should expect in those blessed with the Truth, it should make us all search our own hearts to see to what extent *we* have the *same traits of pride.*

Perhaps this quality of pride is nowhere more manifested than in some of those who have been in the Truth for quite a while. Sometimes it is on the part of the sisters. Sometimes they are very proud of what they know and very domineering in their manner, seeming to think that they know it all. Sometimes it is on the part of the brethern, in whom a spirit of pride appears. They have been placed as Elders. They see that they themselves are right and others are wrong. Sometimes this leads to an attempt to override the liberties of the congregation and to hold power in their own hands.

"BE NOT MANY TEACHERS"

It may not always be our privilege to mention such a matter. Such things may be matters that belong to a class. But, as one Pilgrim brother remarked some time ago, "Brother Russell, I sometimes think that, when we get beyond the veil, *we shall be astonished to find how few of those who have exercised positions of prominence in the Church will be amongst the elect.*" It behooves us all who are associated in the Lord's work to watch ourselves closely, that if we find the slightest tendency in the direction of pride we may stamp it out as we would some contagious disease, knowing what the effects are upon others. We should be sympathic with those who are beset, but not with the difficulty. We are reminded of the Apostle's words, "Be not many teachers knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." Those who have seen the Truth clearly and have some talents and opportunities will have the severer trial on that account.—Z. '12:110-111.

"THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE"

In Zedkiah's case the Lord allowed the natural consequences of his wrong course to follow, and they were severe ed. His sons were slain before his eyes, then he was nded and carried to Babylon, where he was a prisoner until is death. We infer from this that he never came to a properly repentant attitude of heart before the Lord. On the ontrary his father, the previous king, Jehoiachim, who was aken a prisoner to Babylon eleven years before, was subsequently released from prison and granted many favors at he hands of the king of Babylon.

These high ones in nominal Israel may properly enough epresent the more highly favored ones of the Lord's people n spiritual Israel, and we may draw the lesson that the unfaithful, like Jehoiachim, might be chastened and afterwards treated with leniency; but that those who violate the oath of their covenant, their vow to the Lord, breaking that vow, will suffer loss in every sense of the word—they shall thenceforth be blinded by the Adversary to the blessings they had once enjoyed and they will subsequently die the Second Death. Everywhere the Scriptures uphold the thought that a vow, a solemn compact with the Lord, is a most binding obligation. It is under such an obligation that all the members of the New Creation have been granted the first fruits of the spirit. Disloyalty or renouncement of this vow to us could therefore mean nothing short of Second Death.—Z. '05:267.

APPRECIATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF DIVINE LAW

When evil is obtruded upon you, either from without or from within, lift up your heart in prayer to him for the grace promised in every time of need. Keep constantly before you the prayer, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."—Psa. 19:14.

While seeking to follow the various specific commands of Scripture, let us seek more and more to understand and come in sympathy with the *principles which underlie* the Divine Law. These will enable us to judge of the right and the wrong of such of our words, thoughts and acts as may not be particularly specified in the Lord's Word. Indeed, as we come to understand and sympathize with the principles of Divine Law, to that extent we are getting the spirit of the Divine Word. Note the testimony of the Psalmist on this point. "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou, *through thy commandments*, hast made me wiser than mine enemies, *for they are ever with me.* I have more understanding than all my teachers, *for thy testimonies are my meditation.* I understand more than the ancients, *because I keep thy precepts.* I have refrained my feet from every evil way *that I might keep thy Word.* I have not departed from thy judgments, *for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste!* yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! *Through thy precepts* I get understanding; *THEREFORE, I HATE EVERY FALSE WAY. Thy Word* is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."—Psa. 119:97-105.

Shun a contentious and fault-finding disposition as contrary to the spirit, or disposition of Christ—contrary to *love.* A certain amount of combative courage is demanded in overcoming the world, the flesh and the Devil and their various snares. This fighting disposition may become a valuable aid to ourselves and to the Master's cause if rightly and wisely directed against sin, *first* in *ourselves* and *secondly* in others; if used for the Lord and his people and against Satan and all his powers of darkness and superstition. This, in the Scriptures, is called fighting the *good fight,* and we all should be gallant soldiers in this battle for Right and Truth, lovingly defending our Captain's honor and his people's liberties.

But such a good use of combativeness is not pleasing to the Prince of this world, who will seek to *pervert* what he cannot directly *use*. Consequently, he attempts with some to make combativeness a chief virtue. He encourages them to fight everything and everybody; the brethren, more than the powers of darkness; nominal churchmen, more than the errors and ignorance which blind them and make them such. Indeed, his desire is to get us to "fight against God."

Let us be on our guard on this point. Let us, first of all, *judge ourselves*, lest we cast a stumbling-block before others; let us fight down in *our own hearts* the wrong spirit which seeks to make mountains out of trifles and disposes us to be captious and contentious over non-essentials. Greater is "He that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." (Proverbs 16:32.) Let us guard ourselves that our defense of the Truth be, not from motives of self-glorification, but from love for the Truth, love for the Lord, for his people, the brethren. If *love* be the impelling spirit, or motive, it will show itself accordingly in a loving, gentle, patient, humble course toward all the fellow-servants. Let us be "gentle toward all." Let "the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God," which is quick and powerful, do all the *cutting*.

Beware of all thoughts, feelings and conditions of heart directly or remotely connected with malice, envy, hatred, strife. Give these no place in your heart even for a moment; for they will surely do *you* great injury, aside from leading to the injury of others. Keep your heart, your will, your intentions and desires full of love toward God and all his creatures—the most fervent toward God, and proportionately toward all who have his spirit and walk in the way of his direction.—Z. '11-123-124.

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CHRIST THE CENTRE

As the sun is the centre of our solar system, so Christ is the Christian's sun and centre of desire. As gravitation holds the planets in their proper orbits, so love holds the trusting heart in the pathway of willing obedience. As in completing the solar circuit, the earth received the pleasing variety of seasons adapted to beauty and health and to promote all organic life, so in our loving service of Christ, there is a pleasing and useful variety of gracious and profitable experiences. Sometimes fierce storms sweep across our pathway to drive us into the shelter of his promised grace. Sometimes the cold repulsiveness of the world's unbelief and sin chills us like a winter's blast, driving us to the central, steady sunlight of a Savior's constant love, causing springtime to burst forth in the Christian's heart, and bursting buds of developing faith and love to expand into the fruits of Christian grace. But there is no winter in the sun. And he who has the Sun of Righteousness in his heart will have constantly the springtime of his abiding love.—Z. Jan. '88:8.

We must expect continued and increasing testings of faith and love, for in no other manner does it seem possible for the Church to be tested. Thus St. Paul, while admonishing us to mark those who cause divisions (Rom. 16:17), and exhorting again that there be no divisions among you (1 Cor. 1:10), declares, "I hear that there be divisions (schisms) among you, and I partly believe it; for there must be heresies among you *that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*" (1 Cor. 11:18, 19.) Again St. John says, "They went out from us. They were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us; they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."—1 John 2:19, 20.

The substance of this teaching is that while it is true that the Body of Christ is one and should be bound together mutually by the bonds of love and sinews of Truth, nevertheless if, after we have done all in our power to hold a fellow-member with our love and with the truth he departs, we are to take the matter with equanimity, remembering that the Lord knows the heart and that having done all in our power the remainder is for the Lord to attend to and that he will attend to disciplining and bringing back into fellowship with the Body all that are truly his. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." We do not. We do well to remember this and to exercise full confidence and faith in the Lord and his wisdom and love and power in dealing with every disobedient member. It is ours to be kind and gentle toward all, while reminding ourselves and others of the Lord's own statement, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." —Z. '09:118.

Mark them that cause division and stumblings contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and *avoid them* (Rom. 16:17, 18). Do not render evil for evil, nor slander for slander; but both think and speak kindly of them with pitying love, even as toward all men confused by the Adversary. (2 Cor. 4:4.) Let us keep our hearts in the love of God, and full of love for all the brethren, and in love for truth and justice everywhere and on all matters. Let us "*mark*" how the wrong spirit misguides and blinds and leads into the dark, while the right spirit of love, the holy Spirit, guides into the Truth. Let us "*mark*" *the course* taken by those who have separated themselves from us "because they were no longer of us," and whither that course leads them.—1 John 2:19.

We congratulate ourselves, and all the dear "*members*" of the Christ associated with us, that we still *see the "Mystery* of God," and still rejoice in "*the fellowship* of this mystery." (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:36.)—Z. '09:372.

The Church in the hand OF GOD is the Church in the hand of Divine power. That power will use the Church and she will be a crown of glory and a thing of beauty, *gloriously reflecting to all eternity the workmanship of our God*. How glorious it will be! How beautiful! The Lord Jehovah will have the setting of these precious jewels, one reflecting upon another in that crown of glory and diadem of beauty, with the Lord Jesus in the chief place, for the Father will not give to the Church any glory that He would not give to the Lord Himself. The Church is to be displayed before men as "a thing of beauty and a joy forever"—God's handiwork.

He will use them in a very special sense for a thousand years. As a star blazes in glory, so the Lord will make use of each one of the Church. But the use of the Church which the Lord will make at the time will be only a *part* of the work which He intends to accomplish. The Apostle says, "That in the ages to come He might show the *exceeding riches of His grace in* His kindness *toward us* through Christ Jesus.—Eph. 2:7.

All who are in Christ, all who are in the "elect" Body of Christ—to these God will show His *exceeding* grace. His grace and favor will be *showered* upon the Church. And the world will eventually see in the Church the culmination of all God's creative work. The glory of the Church will be manifested in the sight of angels and of men. And so the Lord indicates the blessings that are to be ours if we are faithful.—Z. '11:414.

Do not be bold, except for the right, the truth. So far as yourself is concerned preserve a reverential *fear*—of sin, and of displeasing the Master, and of losing the great reward —"the prize of our high calling." Nearly all who "fall away" first lose all fear and become *self*-confident. They forget that it is only "If ye *do these things* ye shall never fall." 2 Pet. 1:5-10.—Z. '05:216.

There are other bonds of error, outside the pale of the great organizations which claim to be the living church but are dead. There are forms of error purporting to be the light of advanced truth, which only the elect will probably escape, in this evil day. Their full consecration, and faithfulness to the Master, will keep them so near to him that no such plague shall come nigh their dwelling. Being filled with the truth and with the spirit of the truth they will quickly discern error, so that it will have no power to entrap and enslave them.

To all, therefore, who have separated themselves from former entanglements and who desire to continue to STAND FAST in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, we would say, Let us live very near the fountain-head of truth; imbibe its spirit freely; TAKE A FIRM AND POSITIVE STAND FOR TRUTH AND BE FAITHFUL AT ANY COST. The Master we would thus obey, our sure and safe Guide, will be with us to the end. He will never leave us nor forsake us, nor suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but with each temptation provide also a way of escape.

"A thousand may fall at my side,
Ten thousand at my right hand;
Above me his wings are spread wide,
Beneath them in safety I stand.

"His truth is my buckler and shield,
His love he hath set upon me,
His name in my heart he hath sealed
E'en now his salvation I see."
—Z. Sept. '88:5.

However difficult and thorny the path may be, forget not the *privilege* of walking in it. We may not repine and wish it were otherwise; for he that putteth his hand to the plow, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom. (Luke 9:62.) If our Lord had to be so severely tested to prove his worthiness of high exaltation, we should not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. (1 Pet. 4:12.) We must "endure hardness as good soldiers," and wait patiently for "the glory which shall be revealed in us." And for our encouragement let us bear in mind the exceeding great and precious promises:—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne;" "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life:" "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Glorious, indeed, will be that second blessing when fully realized; and even now, as by faith the prospect of its inheritance looms up before us, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, reckoning that the sufferings of this present time, for Christ's sake, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.—Z. Nov. '90:6.

It may and does require close observation to distinguish the real members of the body, but we are told that by their fruits we shall know them. The spirit of the Head controls the entire body of Christ; and notwithstanding the weaknesses of the flesh with which we are still encumbered, that spirit is always discernable.—Z. April. 86:8.

St. Paul declares that as star differs from star in glory, so it will be with those who attain unto the First Resurrection —all will come forth glorious, but some will blaze with a more resplendent brilliancy, because of their great zeal, and therefore their great likeness to their Redeemer and Lord. Jesus likewise mentions the distinctions amongst those who will sit with Him in His throne. He assured James and John that, if they were willing to drink of His cup and be baptized into His death, they should surely sit with Him in His Throne; but as to whether or not they would have the chief places of honor and distinction was not for Him to say. Those places will be given according to the Father's determination; that is to say, according to principles of justice, of merit.

Those will have the places of honor next to the Redeemer, who, in this life, will manifest to God the greatest harmony with His character, in their zeal, their love for God, the Truth and the brethren.—Z. '12:183.

The overcomers are not to be recognized merely as a class—the Bride class—but *each* will have the *personal favor* of the Lord. Of this no one will know save himself and the

King. There is an individual and personal relationship between the Lord and the overcomers, who may be said to receive the mark of identification—the antitypical white stone —*now*, in this life.

This mark is the sealing the Holy Spirit by which the Lord identifies the overcomers. While this is said to be a part of the *final* reward of the Church, yet from the very beginning of our experience we have this personal acquaintance with the Lord. The full seal of the Holy Spirit will be given in the Resurrection, when we receive the new body. —Z. '12:315.

Enoch walked with God many hundred years ago. Men knew him as one who lived a hidden, secret life, whose mystery they could not penetrate; the demons of darkness knew him as one clothed in armor which they could not pierce, and defended by One into whose presence they dared not intrude; but the angels knew him as a man who walked with God, and were not surprised when at last "he was not, for God took him." To such fellowship and intimacy as this, Christians are called.—Z. July '84:2.

Perhaps no quality of heart is in more danger of being blotted out amongst professing Christians today than this thought of *reverence* for God. However much we have grown in knowledge, and however much we have gotten free from superstitions and errors, and however advanced in some respects is the Christian's position of today over that of a century ago, we fear that reverence has been losing ground, not only in the nominal church, but with many of the members of the one "Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven." (Heb. 12:23.) Every loss of reverence is a distinct disadvantage, both to the Church and to the world, paving the way to various evils, and ultimately to anarchy.—Z. '12:79.

So now in the dawning of the grand Millennial Age, we should expect the light to shine out brightly relative to God's plans for this incoming age. And so it does. Search and see. Gem after gem of precious truth now glows with unparalleled lustre to the diligent searcher, not because of his superior ability to find it, but because God's due time has come for such to understand it.—Z. Sept. '84:1.

INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Master!

How little did we realize the import of the words of that dear Faithful Servant, when pointing out to us the trials of the sifting and the separating, the "hour of temptation" which must come upon the Church. And how thankful we are now to our Heavenly Father for the Old Corn Gems which are bringing to our attention those "words" which are so strengthening to our faith at this time.

Our daily prayers are that we and you, dear Brethren, may be able to Stand Fast in this evil day. . . .

With Christian love and prayers,

Bro. and Sis. ————Wash.

Dearly Beloved Brethren:

May the good Lord richly bless you in your endeavors to serve Him, and may He continue to direct you in the narrow way of Truth, is my prayer. . . . .

With much Christian love, I am,

Your Brother by His Grace,

————Iowa.

P. S.—Keep on sending the "Old Corn Gems" as long as the Lord permits.

To the Office Force and Stand Fast Friends in Portland:

Greetings in *His* name!

We take this means of conveying to you our appreciation of the "Old Corn Gems," which are a great help to us at this time. We are still Standing and hope (by His grace) to make our calling and election sure.

We greatly enjoyed Brother ———— visit and were encouraged and strengthened by the three lectures and social talk. He seemed to give us just the things we needed most at this time. . . . .

Will be glad to have a Comforter (or any of you) come whenever it is convenient. The demons are loose and we need all the help and fellowship we can get, and especially your prayers. Christian love to all.

Your Brother and Sister ————, Oregon.

Dear Brethren:

We just had Brother ———— here for two days, and we surely received a most wonderful blessing. He gave us some fine talks, perfectly in harmony with Brother Russell.

We are much encouraged to hear how the Lord is guiding His people and keeping them from harm. Were also very glad to hear of the general Convention to be held in the West. How much I would like to attend it. And we believe the last members will soon be glorified.

If there is an opportunity for a Brother to come here we would be very glad to have him.

Praying the Lord will lead and guide each one of the dear Saints on the Coast,

Your Sister by His grace, ————, Wisc.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in the name of our dear Redeemer!

As a class we decided to write you to express our deep appreciation of the visit of the dear Comforter Brethren who were here the 28th, 29th, and 30th of September. What a grand season of fellowship with each other and communion with the Heavenly Father we enjoyed! The messages delivered by the Brethren were indeed appropriate for the day in which we are living, and it rejoices our hearts to see the evidences which point to our deliverance in the near future.

We realize more than ever before that we are in the midst of the "Hour of Temptation." . . . . The adversary is bending all effort in trying to deceive the "very elect."

There were quite a number of friends from out of town in attendance at our Convention and we were indeed glad to have them with us. All the Standfasts in one of the towns on the route of the Comforters were here, so we had the Brethren with us for the time allotted to that place in addit[illegible] to the two days for which they were scheduled here.

We enjoy the "Old Corn Gems" very much, and get so much good out of the articles that the Pastor wrote several years ago, finding them applicable to the Church at this time as well as the time at which he wrote them.

May the Lord richly bless you in your efforts to serve His saints faithfully, and may we all be knit closer together with the bonds of love.

Yours Brethren in Christ,

Minneapolis Ecclesia.

OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER TWENTY

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IF THEY ONLY KNEW

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, hadst thou but known
Thy day of visitation, hadst thou recognized
Messiah in thy midst, would not thy Pharisees,
With scoffing priests and populace, have vied to do
Him homage? Dost thou think the Master e'er had been
Footsore and weary! Would there not have stood by day,
By night, full threescore chariots ready at His call!
Ah, me! If they had only known, dost think the Feast
At Simon's house had been the only one thus spread;
Or would He e'er have need to say, "The birds have nests,
The foxes of the earth have holes, but I, the Son
Of Man, no place to lay My head!" Jerusalem,
Would not thy palace gates have opened wide to Him,
The Alpha and Omega, Prophet, Priest and King!

Ah, me! Had they but known, in all the centuries since,
The chosen few who bravely followed in His steps,
Dost think Earth's great ones would have left them lonely,
poor,
Despised? Would they have driven proudly by in state,
The while "His feet" pressed wearily the wayside dust?
All ye who often long, like Mary, to have poured
The precious ointment on His head, remember this:
His words are true today as then, that, "Inasmuch
As ye have done it unto one of these, the least
Of Mine, it hath been done to Me!" Ah, yes! and e'en
A cup of water shall not fail of its reward,
Because 'twas given in the name of Christ, the Lord.
Then, let us ever seek to find and humbly serve
His "little ones"; for thus we do it unto Him.

Great men are not fully appreciated while they are among us. Such is true with reference to Pastor Russell. Like the great Master whom he devotedly loved and faithfully served, he was misunderstood and persecuted, all of which he bore in patience. He finished the work given him here to do, and is now forever with the Lord, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for ever more.—Z. '17:326.

A FEW FIGURES

The monthly circulation of the Tower (1891) averages about ten thousand copies, which we may safely estimate represents fifteen thousand readers. And of those readers, scattered in all parts of the world, we estimate, judging from the letters received, that about four thousand are *fully consecrated* to the Lord and using their talents to praise Him to the best of their ability. Such have the Master's assurance that they shall never fall, but that an abundant entrance shall be granted them into the everlasting kingdom and joys of their Lord; for they are faithful, and faithful is he that called them, who also will do all that he has so graciously promised.

This probably 4,000 may look to some like a very insignificant number in comparison with the millions of nominal Christians; and yet if there are so many of the consecrated and faithful now living, it is a large proportion of the full number—144,000 (Rev. 7:4)—to be made up during the 1900 years of the Gospel age, which would be an average of about 76 persons each year. And if 4,000 persons now living are fully consecrated to the Lord and faithful, and have been so developed during the past ten years, this would show an average of 400 persons annually during the past ten years, or more than five times the proportionate annual number. So even this seemingly small estimate of 4,000 may be considerably reduced by the trials and siftings now in process, which are designed to prove their worthiness of the prize of the high calling. Like Gideon's band, this 144,000 is to be a picked and choice company.

The others, the many—and the very anticipation causes pain—will probably all fall, according to the words of our Master's testimony.—Z. '91-3.

* * *

Arrangements are being made for a General Convention of Stand Fast Bible Students at Seattle, Washington, December 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 1919 and January 1st, 1920. Many of the friends from all over the United States and Canada are planning to attend, and we would suggest that as far as possible all should endeavor to avail themselves of the fellowship and benefits to be derived from this gathering of the Lord's saints. Announcement of meeting place and arrangements in a later issue of the "Gems."

Our Beloved Pastor and Brother
CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL
Passed from this life three years ago.

We must remember that He can make no mistake as to who shall stand or who fall. Not one whose name is "blotted out" of the book of life (Rev. 3:5) shall stand; and not one whose name remains, shall fall. He forewarned us who should be "able to stand," and that in all, it would be but a "LITTLE FLOCK," saying, "Think it not strange concerning the *fiery* trial which is to try you, as though some strange things happened upon you"; "The fire of that day shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." 1 Pet. 4:12 and 1 Cor. 3:13. . . . .

When the falling is ended, and those who stand are exalted, doubtless it will be true, that some fell whom *we* had expected would "stand," and that some will be found standing "complete in him," whom we had not expected to come off "victors."—Z. April, 85-7.

Faithful unto death.—Rev. 2:10.

Let us Follow him even as he also Followed Christ.—1 Cor. 11:1.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER TWENTY

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL. Z. '18:51.

"CONSIDER HIM"

"Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."—Hebrews 12:3.

(On Wednesday evening, October 11th, 1916, at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, Brother Russell gave a short address to the New York City Congregation, which proved to be his last words to the Church in the midst of which he lived and labored. . . . . The topic and text were those of the MANNA for the week.)

There is a natural tendency amongst people to tire of a thing when the novelty wears off. Even the hearing of the Truth, strange as it may seem, causes weariness to some after a time. It is the same way with the soldier. It is easy for him to enlist and march forward when the drums are beating and the bands are playing, and enthusiasm runs high; but when the damp, cold weather comes, when ice forms in the trenches and there is no martial music, he is liable to grow weary; and army life does not seem to be nearly so attractive as it appeared at the first. This is true in our spiritual warfare—in fighting the good fight of faith. There are times when all around seems joyous, when the Christian soldiers are marching, and all are stimulated and encouraged; whereas there are times when the clouds hang low and are dark, chilliness surrounds us, ardor is abated, and we are liable to get discouraged. It is partly for this reason that the Lord has directed us to "Consider Him," that thereby we might be stimulated and encouraged to press on and to inspire others. He knew just what we would need.

"LEST YE BE WEARIED AND FAINT IN YOUR MINDS"

The Apostle Paul exhorts us not to forget the assembling of ourselves together, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. Why so? Because "the day" will have its peculiar trials, its difficulties, its attractions in various directions: and the story of the Cross will likely seem old—not as new as some things; and consequently we shall need to bear each other up. Because there is danger of becoming lukewarm spiritually, it is generally recommended that the Lord's people meet together; for to do so is stimulating. In proportion as we seek to stir up others in the way of putting them in remembrance, we are thereby reviving our own minds. We can, therefore, see a wisdom in all of God's arrangements with respect to the Truth.

I believe that in every congregation there is danger of growing weary in well-doing. Well-doing costs something. It means sacrificing. If you are serving the Lord's cause, you are denying yourself in some way. Unless we have some special love for the Lord and for the Truth, we might say, "This is a very tedious work, I am pressed in many other directions, and there are those who are inviting me to see them." So many things come to you, and to us all, that we might consequently be retarded and slacken our efforts. The world, the flesh and the Adversary are pressing hard to draw us, not exactly from the Prize, but from the narrow way that leads to the Prize. They would slacken our zeal and beat our courage down; they would make us faint and cause us to say, "Oh, I am so tired; I cannot do any more!" Doubtless we all have had such experiences. If we get faint in body, we can rest ourselves; but if we get faint in mind, it is more difficult to become refreshed.

WHAT SHALL WE CONSIDER ABOUT HIM?

What, then, shall we do in case we get weary and faint in our minds? The Apostle tells us: "CONSIDER HIM!" Whom? We all know that he is referring to our Lord Jesus, the one great "HIM" in all the whole world. What shall we consider about Him? His birth? Yes, that is profitable; but it is not what the Apostle here suggests. His glory and honor? Not that, exactly; but rather, how much HE ENDURED WITHOUT GETTING FAINT OR WEARY, without giving up the work which He undertook to do. He undertook to do a certain work, and so have we! In some respects we have undertaken the same work that Jesus did. Let us consider Him, lest we get weary and faint in following in His footsteps!

Of course, the world is not exhorted in this text, but merely those who have come into the Lord's family, and have taken up their cross to follow Him—those who have consecrated themselves to Him, those who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice, declaring that they will give all to Him and His service—that they will follow Him at any cost. These are the ones who are exhorted to consider Him.

But what about Him shall they consider? What He endured without fainting, in carrying out the Father's will. What He endured in the way of contradiction of sinners against Himself. This is the very kind of a difficulty which we have in our endeavor to carry out the Father's will. If there were no Devil, no sinners, and no trials, this would be a very pleasant world to go through. It is because we have to swim up-stream, against the current, when almost everything is going in the opposite direction, that we have such a difficult work. Watch the swimmer! He must battle upstream against the down-flowing current; a moment's relaxation and the current carries him downward. With us there is a natural tendency in ourselves, as well as in the currents of thought and activity about us in the world, to pull us back in the opposite direction from which we are trying to go.

OUR LORD'S LOYALTY AND OBEDIENCE

Let us consider His example, His words; or else we may become faint. There are many reasons why we might become so. One of them is that we might consider that the opposition against us is too great. Jesus had the opposition of all those of national influence in His day. He was continually misrepresented, until finally the slanders culminated in His being called a profane person, One who had spoken blasphemies against God, who had said that He was like God, and was as great as God. This was a part of the charge against Him. Although the accusation was not true, nevertheless He endured it, even though He had power to stop it. If He could cast out demons and open the eyes of the blind, then surely He could have done something to change things in His own case. Why, then, did He not do it? Because He was doing the Father's will; and it was the Father's will that He should bear witness to the Truth and demonstrate His loyalty in connection with it.

Is it not the same with us? But why does the Father care about our loyalty? Because He is seeking a certain class for a certain purpose. In Jesus' case, He was seeking one to be the Head of the Church. In our case, He is selecting those who will be members of the Body. He has a great plan that contemplates the overthrow of sin and the blessing of all the families of the earth; and He is now looking for a class who is in sympathty with all His plans and arrangements. He is seeking for those who would rather suffer death than violate His Word, or shrink from doing His Will.

This is our glorious position, and we are considering One who never made a mistake in carrying out the Father's will. Yet He suffered as though He had made a great many serious mistakes. He suffered as a disloyal person, although He had always been loyal. The Jews declared that He had no patriotism at all, yet He was loyal to His own nation in every respect. As Jesus said, "They hated Me without a cause."

HIS TEMPTATIONS SUBTLE

Turn these things over in your mind! Consider Him! This kind of suffering is necessary; for the Father would not be wise in exalting to such a high position anyone who was not thoroughly loyal. He could not give even His own Son the Divine nature without a thorough testing. Our Lord, as a New Creature, was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He was not tempted as a fallen man; He was not tempted with liquor, etc. The temptations coming to the New Creature are different from those which come to the sinner.

Jesus was tempted to grow weary and faint in his mind. This was one of the ways through which special temptations from Satan were placed before Him. Satan told our Lord that He would get rid of these difficulties if He would cooperate with him and would avoid those things which would necessarily and surely come to Him if He should continue in the way marked out by Jehovah. Our Lord's answer was, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

Another temptation was to show the great power which He had received as a spirit-begotten Son, to use this power either to gratify His own natural appetite or to make a display before the people. So it is with those of us who may wish to do things in a showy way instead of in the humble way marked out for us. We may expect to have the same temptations that our Lord had. Therefore we should be on guard that we may prove loyal to the Father.

CHRIST CALLED TO SACRIFICE—"THE BODY" ALSO TO SACRIFICE

"If we *suffer with Him*, we shall also *reign* with Him." The reason why the Father is so careful in making the selection of the Church class, is that they are to reign. He could not take hypocrites or any disloyal ones or even careless ones to be rulers and teachers of the people in the coming Kingdom. He would not select those who had not resisted sin. He must select those who had first learned humility before He could use them to teach humility to others. God desires such a company of priests and judges to be associated with His Son for a thousand years in ruling and blessing the world as will prove faithful under all circumstances—those in whom He can place absolute confidence, who have been tested and found faithful. This is the reason that He tests and proves during this Gospel Age everyone whom He will receive for that future work.

The call of the Gospel Age is, therefore, one to sacrifice. God does not hide this fact from us. He does not call us to simply stand up and say that we wish to be followers of Jesus. No! Our Lord says: "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." There is no deception about the matter. If we have been deceived, it is our fault. The Old Testament says the same thing: "Gather My saints together unto Me; those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." There is nothing hidden. Whoever would follow Jesus must prove his faithfulness by his willingness to sacrifice.

In the past, false doctrines confused us; but now "we see Jesus"—we see what He accomplished, and how He endured without growing weary or giving up. It makes our course plain when we consider Him. We sometimes say that we have not been careful enough in this or that matter, and have consequently made some mistakes. We often find some fault in ourselves, thus demonstrating that we are partly to blame for our sufferings. But in our Lord's case it was different. He received the slanders, the misrepresentation, and everything else that came against Him, without having any fault in Him at all. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," still He endured. We, though following in His footsteps, have not as much to endure as had the Master.

THE OUTCOME OF OUR FAITHFUL ENDURANCE

We are also to consider the outcome. While the Father let Jesus die on the cross as a malefactor, yet He did not let our Lord go permanently, but kept His promise to raise Him from the dead. We have the promise that, as the Father raised up Jesus from the dead, so also will He raise those up who are found worthy by being faithful unto death. In raising up Jesus the Father has given us a testimony to His faithfulness. In the case of Jesus, no one had set Him an example. It was all by faith with Him; none had gone before. With us it is different. Besides, we have not so much to lose as had our Lord. However, if we trust God, He is faithful to keep us and to do what He has promised—to raise us up with our Head. Consider what great things God has done for His Son. Consider also that He has promised us a share in our Lord's glory if we be found faithful. It is amazing—almost beyond conception! Unless God had made it plain, I fear that I would not be able to receive it. If he had said it but once

I might have doubted it; but since He has stated it over and over again in so many ways as to remove all grounds for doubt, I must believe it. How wonderful it seems!

Consider Him! Consider that God has highly exalted Him! Consider what a great privilege has been afforded us of walking in His footsteps, especially as our lives are so imperfect, so unsatisfactory even to ourselves, and as life is all that we have to give. What a thought that God will count our little sacrifice as a part of that which Jesus gave! We are to be heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time." Then to think that we are in the last time *now!* We are right at the close of the Age. The New Dispensation is opening all around us, and the great majority of the people are so bewildered that they do not know what to make of the wonderful things of our day. "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:10). The Lord's true people are the only ones who have a correct understanding of these things.

How carefully the people of God, therefore, should weigh their thoughts and deeds! "Seeing that these (present) things are to be dissolved, ***what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness,*** looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the Day of God. . . . According to His promise we look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless" in His sight. "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."—2 Pet. 3:13-18.

CLOSING EXHORTATION

In view of what we see ahead of us as sharers with Jesus of His glory, honor and immortality, we should be leading holy lives. We should be living in the future rather than in the past. Do not think too much of the past. Let us not live in the past and dwell upon our mistakes and shortcomings, and thus be cast down; but let us believe that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) And we should have such an appreciation of these mercies and blessings of forgiveness as to show it forth in our conduct.

Let us give heed more and more to the suggestion of our text, and consider Him whom the Father has so greatly exalted—so highly exalted. Let us remember that He has called us with the same High and Heavenly Calling and has promised to help us all the way through! If we remember this, we shall cease to be weary and faint and shall become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; we shall go on from grace to grace, from glory to glory; we shall be transformed by the renewing of our minds, more and more proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Then, finally, we shall attain unto the glorious things which He has in reservation for those who love Him more than parents, or children, or self, or any other person or thing.

"Hold on thy way with hope unchilled;
By faith and not by sight;
And thou shalt own His Word fulfilled—
'At Eve it shall be light.' "

—Z. '17:99-101.

"GOD IS IN THE MIDST OF HER"

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God will help her at the dawning of her morning."—Psa. 46:5. Leeser.

Who is this upon whom the great King of the universe hath so set his love, that though all the earth be in the wildest commotion she shall not be moved? Ah, it is she who in compliance with the invitation of the preceding Psalm (45:10, 11) hath inclined her ear, forgetting her own people and her father's house that she might become the joyous bride of the King's Son. She has consecrated the remainder of her life to this one thing—the proving of her worthiness to fill the exalted station to which she is called. Gladly she bids farewell to her own people and her father's house—her human friends and relationships. Henceforth she has no further interest in the hopes, ambitions and aims which she once shared in common with them. The way which leads to the goal of her new ambitions and hopes she also realizes will be long and tedious, set with many a snare, and thronged with numerous foes. But her heart is fixed and she has put her trust in the omnipotent Jehovah, who lovingly assures her (Psa. 46:1) that he will be her refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble. And today, when the trials and dangers are most subtle and ever increasing, God is in the midst of his consecrated ones, his Church, *and she is not moved;* and every moment she is made to realize his presence and help and strong support. God is in the midst of her; nor shall she ever be moved until glory hath crowned what grace hath begun. . . .

Yes, "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and he is in the midst of them. He knows their loyalty to him and they know his voice and are ever ready to follow his leading. Thus no harm can overtake them. They will stand and not fall, and will in the end be crowned as victors. A thousand will fall at their side and ten thousand at their right hand in this day of trial, but they will be kept in the very midst of the wildest confusion. ***They may, as the trial proceeds and as the fainthearted and unfaithful fall, be left to stand almost or entirely alone in their several localities;*** but then they will realize all the more the preciousness of being alone with God.

Trials and siftings are as necessary to the Church's prosperity and development as is the truth, and none of these things need discourage any. If some go out from us, it is because they were not of us (1 John 2:19), and those who still stand after such purification should be the dearer to one another, as they are to the Lord, and should the more endeavor to strengthen and comfort one another with his words.

The promise that God shall ever be in the midst of his faithful Church guarantees her steadfastness—"God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved." His watchful eye is upon all the ways of his saints. He will give his angels (his messengers or servants) a charge concerning them (messages of truth and grace) and in their hands they shall bear them up, lest they dash against the hidden rocks of error and destruction. (Psa. 91:11, 13.) ***There is therefore no saint of God so weak, or unlearned, or beset with subtle opposing forces, as not to be abundantly able to STAND, even in this evil day, if he is only loyal and faithful to God.*** And his blessed help will be gloriously realized in the fruition of all their hopes in the dawning of the morning of their new life beyond the vail.—Z. '91:108-109.

Those who win the prize will be heirs of God to the highest honors and glories which have ever been offered—to a glory and honor beyond human power to imagine! We believe that no such offer will ever again be made.—Z. '16:56.

"IN DUE TIME"

Time is one of the most important factors in God's plan. The days of creation were long periods of time; the time of man's experience with evil has been six days of a thousand years each; the day of redemption and of the development of the Church has been nearly two thousand years. Time has been necessary for the accomplishment of God's great work; and it has also been necessary in proving to man the righteousness of God's character. Only time could prove to men his invincible justice. Six thousand years ago his sentence of death passed upon mankind, and during all that time he has permitted generation after generation to go down into the grave in the midst of agony and blood and tears. And although he loved men so, even while they were yet sinners, that he spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, yet he has never for a moment relented to interpose his power for the relief or release of the groaning creation; nor will he do so until his "due time"—the time which his wisdom appointed, which will be the very best time for the securing of the largest possible results to the race, both of knowledge and of advantageous experience, as well as the development of several of the most important features of his plan. But as time only can develop God's plan, so time only can manifest his love, as well as his wisdom, his grace, his power and his justice.

Time will fully manifest the divine wisdom in what seems to short-sighted humanity like pitiless delays. Already those who are privileged to view by faith the divine plan see the necessity of time for its full accomplishment. It is in view of such necessity that the Children of God are frequently exhorted to patience. God has kindly brought us to his standpoint of view and bidden us look into the glorious future—to the outcome of his plan; and in proportion as we are able to comprehend and believe it, we may rest and rejoice in it. But in the meantime, being thus graciously refreshed by the cheering prospect, we must patiently wait for the end, however painful the waiting season may be.

Patience is a virtue which our Heavenly Father desires to cultivate in us; and he manifests in himself the grandest example of it. Through all the centuries past he has patiently endured the reproaches of those who, failing to understand the course of his wisdom in executing justice and in working out the deep designs of his abounding grace, attributed evil, and only evil, to his truly glorious and holy character. He knows that *"in due time"* his character will be fully vindicated, and so he patiently waits and works and endures. So also our Lord Jesus waits and endures. He endured great humiliation in coming to our low estate. Then as a man he patiently endured the contradiction of sinners against himself and the ungrateful persecution, even unto death, from those he came to save. And, like his Heavenly Father, through it all he was cheered in consideration of that *"due time,"* though then in the far distant future, when his character, and also the Father's character, would be fully vindicated and manifested to every creature in heaven and in earth. And will our blessed Lord Jesus and our adorable Heavenly Father await with patience the grand consummation. So, in similar attitude of mind, must we wait; for the servant is not above his Lord, and our rejoicing in view of the future will, if we have the mind of Christ, be not only because of our own prospective vindication and glory, but also in prospect of the vindication and glory of God and of our Lord Jesus, and of the prospective everlasting triumph of truth and righteousness.

The waiting time is by no means a time of rejoicing, except in hope. This is a time when truth and righteousness are being humbled in the dust, when they that live godly must suffer persecution, when our eyes must look upon scenes of sorrow and mourning, when our ears must hear the wails of distress, and when our feeble flesh must experience the pangs of death. But O! there is a glorious release to come *"in due time."* Wait for it patiently: "Let patience have her perfect work." Submit to the humbling process. The Church's pathway of present humiliation leads to the future glory.

"Humble yourselves," says the Apostle, "under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you *in due time.*" *Do not make the great mistake of seeking present exaltation at the expense of that which is to come "IN DUE TIME" to those who patiently endure to the end.* It is only in proportion as any turn their eyes away from the glory to follow *"in due time,"* and thus lose faith in it, that they begin to prize the trifling recompenses which the world offers for the sacrifice of their birthright. Let us, therefore, beloved, keep the eye of faith fixed upon the hope set before us in the gospel, and. forgetting those things that are behind—all worldly ambitions, etc.—let us press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling, which shall indeed be realized by the faithful—*"in due time"*; for "faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it." His purposes cannot fail, nor his word return unto him void.—Z. '92:69-70.

THE GREAT SHAKING NOW IN PROGRESS

"Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised saying. Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word. Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."—Hebrews 12:26, 27.

Why should there be so many trying experiences in the church at this time? is a question often asked. A Scriptural consideration of the period in which we are living clearly answers this question. And we believe all who will thus prayerfully and carefully examine the matter will, instead of having their faith shaken by reason of the trials that are now upon the Lord's people, have it greatly strengthened. *This is a time when all the consecrated should have confident assurance of their standing with the Lord.* Since making a consecration, our hope has been for an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Confident assurance of the establishment of Messiah's kingdom is that condition of mind resulting from believing the teachings of the Scriptures upon the subject. These teachings are clear, cogent, and convincing; so that, thoroughly relying upon them, all doubt of an *EARLY* establishment of the kingdom is removed.

Each one who will enter the kingdom must have his faith thoroughly tested. This test will demonstrate who is loyal and who is not. To be faithful means not only to know the truth and rely upon it, but to be *loyal to the Lord*—to Jehovah, to Christ Jesus, to the cause of truth and to the brethren. *Loyalty to the very core will be required of those who enter in.*

In chapters eleven, twelve and thirteen of the epistle to the Hebrews the apostle presents the most convincing argument concerning the establishment of the kingdom and the conditions to prevail immediately preceding that event. In the eleventh chapter he defines faith, without which it is impossible even to be considered in the class that is running for the prize of the kingdom. He defines the elements of faith, which, when once acquired, lead to confident assurance and loyalty. Beginning with Abel, the first martyr to shed his blood for the cause of righteousness, the apostle enumerates many of that array of strong characters, which reaches down to and includes John the Baptist, the last and greatest of the prophets. The crowning virtue of each of these approved ones, that which gained for him a good report before God, was his *LOYALTY* to the Lord and to righteousness. It would appear that the very purpose of the historical record in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews is to establish definitely in the mind of the Christian the fact that the fixed law of Jehovah approves only those who are fully loyal at heart; and the further fact that to prove *himself* loyal he must endure many trying experiences. He must fight against the foes of righteousness, and he must fight loyally to the end. *Applied to the fully consecrated Christian, these principles prove that only the truly loyal at heart will be able to stand the great shaking that precedes the establishment of the kingdom.*

The apostle waxes eloquent when he describes the virtues and achievements of the faithful ancient worthies. He tells us that time would fail him to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephtha, David and other prophets, who by reason of their faith and loyalty subdued kingdoms; wrought righteousness; fought with wild beasts; quenched the violence of fire; turned armies to flight; endured mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment; wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; were stoned, sawn asunder, and slain with the sword; of whom the world was not worthy. All this they did that they might obtain a better resurrection. But they have not yet received the thing promised, God having prepared a better thing for the Gospel church. But when the church is perfected, then these faithful ones of old shall come into their reward.

WRITTEN AFORETIME FOR OUR ADMONITION

Why did the Lord cause the apostle to record these events so much in detail? Because they are experiences typical of the experiences that should come to the members of the church. Those trying things demonstrated the loyalty of the men of old, and prove that those who enter into the kingdom must possess a like loyalty. These faithful worthies were consecrated, but they had no opportunity to obtain membership in the heavenly phase of the kingdom; for the ransom sacrifice was not yet given.

The apostle's argument beginning with the twelfth chapter shows conclusively that the eleventh chapter was written for the very purpose of encouraging Christians in their trying experiences. There he says in substance: "Take into consideration the great trial through which the prophets and faithful worthies passed; and having in mind the promise of membership in the heavenly kingdom, let those experiences be a stimulus to you to endure cheerfully whatsoever the Lord is pleased to give you; having in mind also the Lord Jesus who was the author and who will be the finisher of your faith, who rejoiced greatly in the prize set before him and endured all hardships and persecutions gladly. Take these into consideration, therefore, lest you become wearied and faint in your minds. You have not yet resisted to the end; but you must thus resist in order to prove your loyalty to the Lord!

What an encouragement to Christians at this time, who may be undergoing severe trials and tribulations! There is a disposition when severely tested to draw back and give up the fight. Not infrequently one will say: "I wonder why the Lord permits me to have such severe trials. Why does the church have to endure such trying experiences now?" To this the apostle answers in substance: "You have forgotten that the Lord disciplines his called ones, and that he puts them through the necessary trials for that purpose. He does this because he loves his children." It is added then that if we endure this discipline cheerfully, God deals with us as his sons. To emphasize the matter he says that if we are without this discipline we should have cause to be alarmed. It would be an evidence that we were not sons. In other phrase, trying experiences are indispensable to all those who come into the kingdom.

INAUGURATION OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM AT HAND

"But," one asks, "why are these trials more severe just now?" The apostle answers that question, saying, "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel . . . whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."

In brief, we are told that when the feet members of the church approach the inauguration of the kingdom there will be a great shaking and testing. A picture or illustration of this was given at the institution of the Law Covenant at Mount Sinai. God directed the children of Israel through Moses to purify themselves three days, saying that on the morning of the third day he would make a covenant with them through Moses as their mediator. On the third day, amidst a great convulsion of the elements, the covenant was made This circumstance foretold that Messiah's kingdom would be inauguarated in the morning of the third thousand-year day. Moses vividly describes the events accompanying the institution of the Law Covenant. There was a great fire in Mount Sinai. A blackness settled down over the mountain, darkness and tempest, the sounding of trumpets, the voice of words; and so terrible was the sight and the sound that the people of Israel entreated that such should not be repeated to them. Even Moses said: "I do exceedingly fear and quake" Exodus 19:1-9.

We are now well into the morning of the third thousand-year day, There is great darkness and blackness over the nations and kingdoms of the earth. The shaking is in progress. Kingdoms and governments are being shaken. The financial powers are shaken. The ecclesiastical elements are shaken. The temptations and trials that have come to the world of mankind must be met by those of the church yet in the flesh. The Lord has promised the faithful, however, that he will not suffer them to be tempted above their ability to endure; but that with each temptation or trial he will provide a way to escape. —Corinthians 10:13.

In the picture made at Mount Sinai, and mentioned by the apostle, only the things of earth were shaken; but now, he says that God will "shake not the earth only, but also heaven." This means that all things pertaining to the governmental institutions of the earth and all the ecclesiastical systems and those who are of the truly consecrated shall be shaken, "that those things which cannot be shaken (out) may remain." Clearly, the apostle states that the purpose of this shaking is not merely to shake out the disapproved, but *to make manifest who are approved of the Lord, who are accounted worthy. Absolutely certain it is that the kingdom class cannot be shaken out,* for the reason that if they could be shaken they could not be of the kingdom. This time of testing is the same to which the Lord Jesus referred when he said that he would send forth his messengers to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity. (Matthew 13.41). *It is the time of FINAL testing for the church;* and this testing will make known who are faithful and loyal; all others will be shaken out.

ADMONITION FOR PREPAREDNESS

The evidence about us everywhere shows that the institutions of this world are going to pieces. Seeing, then, that this is "the end of all things," we should expect a shaking in the church; and if there should be no shaking there might be reason for doubt as to the nearness of the Lord's kingdom. Instead of these trials bringing to us discouragement, let us look up and lift up our heads, because our deliverance draweth nigh. . . . .

Let us see to it, dear brethren, that we do not indulge in strife. Whatsoever another may do, let us follow the apostle's admonition to live in peace and pursue a course of holiness, without which we shall not be permitted to see the Lord. *We should manifest our disapproval of those who show a wrong spirit by calmly and quietly withdrawing ourselves.* Let us refrain from indulging in acrimonious debate or discussion "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me." (Psalm 39:1.) It matters little who is in the majority here. The question with each one of us should be, Am I heeding the instructions of the Lord and his inspired apostles? Let us keep uppermost in our mind at all times that we are now approaching the inauguration of the kingdom. We see that the prophetic words of the apostle are being fulfilled; and it behooves us to run patiently, to be of calm and sober mind, watchful and prayerful, permitting nothing to swerve us from the right course or to divert our attention, from the great prize of entering and participating in the kingdom.

Our Lord, speaking of this time says: "The Son of Man will send forth his messengers, and they will gather out of his kingdom all the seducers and those working the lawlessness," i. e. those who are lawless.—Matthew 13:41. Diaglott.

TESTS ALONG OTHER LINES

A further admonition is: "Let brotherly love continue." Thus we are shown that this great shaking will severely test our love for the brethren. Love for the brethren means an unselfish desire to do good to the brethren and the putting of that desire into operation even at a sacrifice to ourselves, having in mind the building up of such an one in the most holy faith. Such desire, then, would preclude us from contending in the class for our own way; and, on the contrary, would lead us to be patient and kind with others; and should it become necessary for us out of good conscience to take a course contrary to others, then with calmness and sobriety we should state our position and leave it there, avoiding all controversy.

Some of the Lord's dear children in this time of great stress may be disturbed about their prospects of supplying things needful for themselves and dependent ones. There may be a temptation here to turn aside from active participation in the service with a view of amassing a sum of money. Some might even be induced to think that it would be proper to let their minds be turned into the channel of money-making to the exclusion of spiritual interests, and that they would give any overplus to the work. But a warning is apparently given against such a course. The literal rendering of Hebrews 13:5, 6, is: "Let not your turn of mind be toward money-making, but be content with such things as you have; for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So then with good courage we can say, the Lord is my helper; I will not fear."

The real vocation of the Christian is to prepare himself for entering the kingdom—to be made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." Let the sentiment of our hearts find expression in the words of Brother Paul: "This one thing I do." Let our purpose be a single one, resolving by God's grace to prove our loyalty and fidelity to him, come what may.

THE GLORIES OF THE KINGDOM

Since the mind is the battleground, we do well to keep before our mental vision the exceeding great and precious promises and the glories that await those who love the Lord supremely. Let us, then, at times take a mental view of that which we are approaching. "Ye are approaching Mount Zion, the city of the living God," which means the kingdom of our Lord. That the peoples of earth and the creatures of heaven may ever appreciate the importance of this great kingdom God will manifest his power and justice to all, inaugurating his kingdom amid a great time of trouble—afterward the peoples of earth will learn to know his *love*.

The faithful martyrs looked and hoped for the coming of this kingdom, but were not permitted to know the time or manner of its coming. The Psalmist sang of its coming, and those songs have gladdened the hearts of Christians throughout the Gospel age. Long has natural Israel hoped for its coming. Long has spiritual Israel prayed for its coming; and now with joy we can say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." In happy anticipation the members of the Bride this side the vail await their change. We may reasonably expect the change to come during a fiery time of great disturbance and shaking. But this change will come in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. One moment the creature will be corruptible; the next, incorruptible. One moment, in weakness; the next, in power. One moment, amid the clouds of blackness and darkness; the next moment, ushered into the glorious light of the divine nature. In our minds now we have gone beyond the vail and are about to behold the assembly of the glorious sons of God. For whom shall we first look?

THE JOYOUS INTRODUCTION

If a person who expected to be presented to an earthly king or potentate had a friend who was acquainted at that court, he would certainly desire first to consult his friend and receive some suggestions as to how he should appear before the court. Court functions are always attended with much formality and dignity. We are expecting to be presented to the great King of kings, before whom all things must be graced with dignity and formality. Have we a friend who knows something about that great King? Yes, indeed. We are assured that all along our pilgrim journey we have been attended by our guardian angel. (Hebrews 1:14; Psa. 34:7.) Speaking of the Lord's little ones, Jesus said: "In Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven." (Matt. 18:10.) In describing the general assembly of the church of the first-born, the apostle mentions first an innumerable company of angels. Pure, lovable, and beautiful in form and character must these be. They have kept a record of our journey and of our blessed assembling together. (Malachi 3:16.) Anxious shall we be to become acquainted with these precious and beautiful creatures who have been our helpers along the way. May we not want their help further to know just what to do that we may be presented properly to the great King, in harmony with the dignity of his court? Having loved and served us along our earthly journey, surely they will be glad to direct us when first we reach the kingdom and we shall be glad to make their acquaintance. It would not seem reasonable that one born on the spirit plane would immediately have all knowledge; but he would have to acquire knowledge after reaching that condition. Hence the angels could be of assistance.

Next is mentioned the "church of the first-born," of which Christ Jesus, the great King, is the Head. Certainly we shall be eager to see our wonderful Lord—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, who redeemed us to God with his precious blood, and who has made it possible for us to aspire to membership in the kingdom and to enter the race-course. To us he is the dearest friend, our Advocate and our Deliverer. And now, entering the kingdom, the relationship of bride and bridegroom is about to be experienced in its completeness. How thrilling will be that time! Behold him! He is the fairest of ten thousand and altogether lovely. From the time, when by faith we first knew the Lord, we have longed for the hour when we might see him face to face. Then shall we express to him our devotion and love as we desire. Then "we shall be like him and see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.) "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." The joy of meeting the Lord cannot be approximated.

We shall next desire to see the various members of the Royal Family. Among these will be especially the Apostles, who so faithfully served the Lord and left food upon which we have fed. Then we shall look for those whom we have known and especially loved here, and whom the Lord used as a special blessing or help to us. Every member who has come to a knowledge of the truth during the harvest period of this age will be especially anxious to greet Brother Russell, that faithful messenger of Laodicea. *To us he has been the dearest friend amongst men whom we have seen; for the Lord used him to bring to us the message of the divine plan.* Without doubt he will occupy a very honorable position in that Royal Family. Others who will compose that heavenly assemblage we shall be anxious to see, for they have been specially near and dear to us; some with whom we have had special opportunities of service, whose weaknesses and virtues, whose love and devotion to the Lord and his cause we have learned of, with whom we have passed through peculiarly fiery trials, which greatly blessed us. All the members of that family will be beautiful; for all will be like the Lord. But as star differeth from star, so shall the glory of one differ from that of another. What a glorious convention that will be!

THE GREAT ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH

For some years it has been the blessed privilege of many of the Lord's dear people to meet at conventions; and the sweet experiences there enjoyed have been but foretastes of the general convention which is so near at hand. At our earthly conventions the difficulty has been in separating after coming together. At the general convention there will be no separation. In due time we shall become acquainted with all of the 144,000 perfect, beautiful, glorious beings. There will be nothing there to mar the beauty and sweetness of the fellowship with each other through eternity.

Next in order will be the presentation of the church before Jehovah, which will surely be attended with great ceremony and splendor. It is unthinkable that heaven is a place where every one is constantly beholding every one else. Surely Jesus and his bride will have a place prepared especially for them (John 14:2, 3) to which none other shall be admitted. Surely Jehovah inhabits a place of exclusion, where none other can gaze upon him except by his permission.

The day approaches for the presentation of the bride before the throne of God, and the Apostle informs us that to Jesus is granted this honor. In vision we behold an innumerable company of angels assembled before the throne of the all-wise, all-loving, eternal Jehovah. The trumpets of the heavenly heralds announce the approach of the Bridegroom with his bride. Music of surpassing sweetness fills the heavenly courts. Behold the conquering Hero approaching with his bride upon his arm! All honor and praise is due to him. Every knee in heaven is bowing to him and every tongue is singing his praise. He presents before Jehovah his bride, whom he has redeemed and blest. She is garbed in her robes of glory and beauty; "her clothing is of in-wrought gold. She shall be brought to the King in raiment of embroidered work." (Psalm 45:13, 14.) Thus the prophet in symbol describes her immortality and inherent beauty. "Faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy," shall he present his bride. (Jude 24, 25.) Then the union is made complete.

"Oh, that will be a union such as earth has never known,
When Bride and Bridegroom are made one before the great
white throne!"

The members of the church of the first-born, the bride of Christ, will be a special monument to the grace of God. She has been taken from an unrighteous race and exalted to the highest position in heaven. Of her the prophet says: "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." (Isa. 62:3.) And "in the ages to come God will show forth the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:7.) And thus she will ever be the recipient of Jehovah's favor. Having in mind the blessedness, the glory and honor and the surpassing sweetness of being in that general assembly in heaven, who would not gladly undergo any and all kinds of shakings and testings that the Lord might see fit to give his people in order that they might have part in that kingdom! "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

In this time of the greatest crisis in the world's history, a time of the worst shaking yet known, a time of petty trials and fiery experiences that have come upon the Lord's people, if we keep in mind the glories of the kingdom we shall be enabled to endure; and forgetting the things behind, and looking to that wonderful thing before, to press forward along the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Beloved, let us think it not strange concerning these fiery times through which the church is passing, but rather, receiving them as a strengthener to our faith, let us with calmness and sobriety meet them, keeping a pure heart toward all; and soon we shall be forever with the Lord.—Z. '18:83-87.

"Live as peaceably with all men as lieth within the range of your possibilities." With the various crooked natures of the world, and with our own imperfect dispositions (more and more coming under control of grace however) it will be a difficult matter to avoid all friction. But while in the interest of peace we are to submit to trifling wrongs and injustices with good grace, yet there is a place where we must draw the line; a place where our desire for peace must not control: that is, whenever a principle is involved. Here is a great difficulty: those who are naturally peaceable, will be tempted to pursue peace at the expense of principle, and in conflict with the divine commands; on the other hand many of those who are firmest in defense of righteous principles are inclined to be combative, and have great need to guard themselves and to cultivate this disposition for peace, which is a part of the divine character which we are to copy. The rule should be, "First pure (truthful and loyal to righteousness) then peaceable."—James 3:17. Z. '97-267.

And as John (the Baptist) never emerged from that prison, save to enter the deeper dungeon of the grave, from whence God will in due time bring him forth to power and glory, so when the coming night imprisons and fetters the faithful elect, *the ONLY DELIVERANCE they can hope for will be through the depths of the valley of the shadow of death* into the glorious Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whose they are and whom they serve.—Z. '95:9.

THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOUSE

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."—Psa. 24:1-4.

There will be but one Kingdom (mountain or hill) in all the world—the Kingdom of God; and his Anointed will be King in all the earth in that day. (Zach. 14:9.) This hill or kingdom of the Lord is that to which the Psalmist refers when he raised the question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place?" To ascend into the hill of the Lord is to come into his Kingdom as loyal and obedient subjects, as true citizens, worthy of all its blessings and privileges; and not as aliens and foreigners, having no part nor lot in the common interests and inheritance of all the true and loyal people of God, viz., eternal life and all its blessings of righteousness, peace and everlasting joy. Who indeed shall be counted worthy thus to ascend into the mountain of the Lord? "And who shall stand in his holy place?" The reference here is to the antitype of the typical temple of God, which, standing upon the top of Mount Zion, prefigured the glorious true temple, the Church of the living God, in Kingdom power and glory. Who shall stand in that holy place in that age of glory and blessing now so near at hand?—who shall be counted worthy to reign with Christ in his Kingdom?

The answer to both inquiries is the same: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." These will be the required qualifications for *citizenship* in the Kingdom, when the Kingdom is established; and they are also the qualifications required now of all those who would be heirs of that coming Kingdom. It will be observed that the qualifications mentioned are not those of faith (for faith in the gospel of the Kingdom, which includes faith in Christ, the King and Redeemer, is *implied* in the desire to be in the Kingdom in any capacity): but the qualifications mentioned here are those of character. The Scriptures elsewhere make more specific mention of the necessary faith, but always implying a character consistent with the faith. (Acts 16:31; John 3:16, 36). The prophet does not ignore faith, but points to that character which is the legitimate consequence of a true faith exercised unto godliness. A faith which does not produce character is null and void. (Jas. 2:17). Therefore it is plain that both the heirs and the subjects of the Kingdom of God must have that character which is both begotten and developed by the faith of the gospel; for if the faith of the gospel be held in unrighteousness there is no place in the Kingdom for any such. (Rom. 1:18). Let us consider the character-requirements here mentioned.

"Clean hands."—That means clean actions, clean conduct. If bad habits of any kind have been cultivated, they must be promptly forsaken. The hands must not be defiled with the holding of bribes, nor with the gain of oppression, and every evil thing must be resolutely put away. (Isa. 33:15). It is in vain that any profess loyalty to God and to his anointed King and Kingdom while they continue in a sinful course of action. *Loyalty to the Kingdom signifies determined opposition to sin in all its forms and a firm resistance of it.*

"A pure heart."—That signifies purity of will, intention or purpose, which, like the needle to the pole, always turns toward righteousness. Though some sudden or strong temptation may for an instant, through the weakness of the flesh, draw it to the right or to the left, yet quickly it recovers its normal position which is true to righteousness and truth. A pure heart loves righteousness and truth, and hates iniquity. It loves purity, despises all that is impure and unholy. It delights only in the society of the pure, and shuns all others, knowing that "evil communications corrupt good manners."

"Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity."—Pride is an abomination to the Lord and to all those who partake of his spirit. It is a weed which, if once permitted to take root in the heart, will soon crowd out every grace. The Psalmist says, "I hate vain thoughts"; and such should be our sentiments. The grace of humility, meekness, is one of the most beautiful that can adorn the character. It takes a sober estimate of personal qualifications, is not puffed up, does not behave unbecomingly, and seeks to exercise its talents, not for pride and vain glory, but for the joy of doing good. It is modest, candid and sincere, both in consideration of its own qualifications and those of others. *What comfort and pleasure are found in the society of those possessed of such a spirit!*

"Nor sworn deceitfully."—Those who make a solemn covenant with the Lord, and who thereafter willfully despise or ignore it, have sworn deceitfully, and surely no such disloyal subjects can be admitted either to citizenship or heirship in the Kingdom of God. But those who, in this age, have made a solemn covenant with God and who are true to their covenant, even unto death, they shall ascend into the holy place, the temple of God—they shall be the heirs of the Kingdom, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; while all such, in the age to come.,shall be recognized and privileged citizens of the Kingdom. These shall receive the blessings of the Lord promised in his Word. After first receiving the imputed righteousness of Christ through faith, they may, under divine grace, be made perfect in righteousness and worthy of eternal life.

This is the generation of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob. Men do not obtain these blessings without seeking them, nor without seeking them in God's way—through Christ, by humble reliance upon his finished work of redemption, and by the full consecration of all their ransomed powers of mind and body to his holy will, which is only our reasonable service.

Beloved, ye who are called by his grace to STAND in his holy place, let us ponder these things. Are our hands clean and our hearts pure? Are we *humble and faithful to our covenant?* Let us see that we meet these conditions, and let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus. —Z. '02:358, 359.

It must not, therefore, prejudice our judgments to find the popular voice against us. What we seek for and listen for is the voice of the Lord through his Word. With this let us be satisfied as was our Redeemer, content whatever lot we see since it is our God who leadeth us. It is possible that the closing scenes of the Church's experience may in some respects resemble that of our dear Redeemer; it is possible that some of the Lord's people may be branded as blasphemers and hailed before governments on the charges of preaching Christ as another King. Should it ever come to such a pass, we should have no doubt whatever respecting our position. It should be that of full confidence in the Lord, and through faithfulness to him, to his Word, and to all the brethren. Let us leave the outcome of these trials and testings in the hands of the Lord, assured by his Word that he will make these afflictions to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—Z. '04-155.

Born in Allegheny, Pa., February 16, 1852. Glorified on October 31, 1916, while about his Father's business. 1 Cor. 15:52.

"LEST WE FORGET"

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."—Hebrews 12:14.

Although the Lord's people are counseled by the Lord's Word to be peacemakers, and to pursue peace, nevertheless they are forewarned that they must *fight*. On the surface these injunctions seem paradoxical. It seems strange that we should be admonished to be peacemakers and then be told that we are to fight. These conflicting statements may be harmonized, however. If we are loyal to the Lord and to His cause, our loyalty will bring us into opposition with whatever is contrary to God. It is not that we are to strive with people; but the very fact that we are counseled to be peacemakers implies that there will be opposition.

How is it that when one wishes to do right and is doing this to the best of his ability he meets with opposition? It was so with our Master. Although He was perfect, yet He had opposition. We need not be surprised, then, if we who are imperfect should have similar experiences. What did Jesus do to cause people to do evil toward Him? He did only good and sought to bless all. His loyalty to the Father, however, made it a necessity for Him to rebuke sin and error. This brought upon Him the antagonism of those who upheld these sins and errors. The darkness hates the light because it is a constant rebuke to the darkness.

Then we not only have the opposition of the spirit of the world, but also the opposition of our own fallen flesh and the virulent opposition of the great Adversary and his hosts. What a power this all means! At one time in our lives we did not know what it meant to have the opposition of the world, the flesh and the Devil; but we are learning what this means, dear brethren. Our great Adversary is a very wily foe, and is on the alert to seize every opportunity to ensnare and entrap us, to put our enemies in antagonism against us, and to stir up all kinds of persecution and opposition. One might think that Satan would be satisfied to have taken the wrong course himself; and that he would ere now have been ready to say, "I have had enough of it." Why does he not say this? It is because he is so implacable a foe to God and to all that is good. He has so hardened his heart to all that is holy that he cannot be renewed to repentance, to change about and take an opposite course.

LET US TAKE WARNING FROM SATAN'S COURSE

What a solemn warning this should be to us to resist stoutly and unequivocally the very beginnings of sin, to resist the approach of temptation to be disloyal to God in the slightest degree, by hastening to the Throne of Grace in every time of danger! The Adversary's designs seem to be especially against the saints of God. He steadfastly opposes all those who desire to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, rather than those who walk according to the course of this world; for the latter are already more or less under his control. He does not seek to run after them or seek to entrap them. All he needs to do is to keep them from the light.—2 Cor. 4:4.

Satan does not wish the glorious light of God's goodness to shine into men's hearts; for wherever the light of Truth goes it brings a transformation. We become changed men and women as soon as the Truth shines into our hearts; and this transformation goes on day by day. When Satan sees this, he exerts all his power to blind the one who has gotten out from under his domination, and to weave his web around him again. When the fly begins to struggle to escape, the spider at once proceeds to strengthen the web around him. If the fly escapes the snare, the spider will again entrap him, if possible.

But in spite of the foes with which we have to contend, the foes without and within, we are perfectly safe so long as we keep close to the Master. Stronger and greater is He that is on our part than all they that are against us. We have learned something of the character of our Heavenly Friend. At first we saw that God was a great Being, deserving of our reverence; but now we are coming to see more and more how just He is, how wise He is, how loving and lovely He is. As we come to thus appreciate His glorious character, it inspires within us a great desire to be like Him, and we find that the injunction of the Scripture is that we should be like our Father in Heaven. Jesus was like Him, and we are instructed to become copies of God's dear Son. "Be ye followers of us," said the Apostle, "even as we are followers of Christ."

SELF OUR SPECIAL BATTLE-GROUND

We are now God's special representatives in the world, fighting a good fight of faith against sin and evil, especially in ourselves. We are not at all commissioned to clean up the world. The Bible gives us no such instructions. The Lord will use us to do this work by and by, when we reach the Kingdom. We cannot now quite get ahead of the evil that we find in our own flesh, and so we need to turn our forces against sin entrenched in our mortal bodies. We need to exercise great care lest, while we preach to others, we ourselves should become castaways. What a thought that is, that, after having told others about God, His love, His power and His salvation in Christ, we should ourselves become castaways from this glorious salvation!

As New Creatures we should be very vigilant, should continue to grow, should increase in power to overcome the flesh. Then we shall be safe. Self is to be our special battleground. Many of the Lord's people have a great deal of natural combativeness. This is a good trait if controlled and turned in the right direction. Combativeness is necessary, or we could never overcome. But we need to restrain ourselves that we do not fight the brethren; and we are not to enter into a personal combat with the Devil. We are no match for him. But we are to *resist* him. The Lord will soon take hold of him and bind him up for a thousand years. He will conquer the Adversary and will undo all his works. But it will require the entire thousand years to accomplish fully that work. We need not hope to overthrow Satan or his works while we are in the flesh. It is not our mission. What the Lord has given us to do is to ***conquer ourselves***, to control this body which is of the fallen race of Adam, to keep ourselves that that Wicked One touch us not.—1 John 5:18.

We all have natural inclinations toward sin. It is necessary, therefore, that we overcome the inclinations of the flesh, the disposition of the flesh—all these things that war against the Spirit. From the moment that we surrendered ourselves to the Lord and were begotten of the Holy Spirit, we were New Creatures. Old things have passed away, and all things have become new. We no longer belong to the old family, the family of Adam; we are an entirely new creation. We have passed from death unto life, from condemnation to death in Adam to a new life in Christ. The continuation of this new life will depend upon our faithfulness as children of God. We must show our loyalty to the Lord by resisting everything that pertains to the old life.

SCRIPTURAL ENCOURAGEMENTS TO COME OFTEN TO GOD

None of us can fully do the things that we would. Some are more and some less fallen by nature. If we think we are succeeding fully, it is because we are more or less blind to our own deficiencies. We *would* do perfectly, but we *cannot*. But by fighting a good fight, we are to prove to the Lord that we are doing the best we can. We are not merely to make a little effort, but are to put forth ***all our strength***, which will be supplemented by the grace of the Lord. If, then, in spite of ***our best efforts*** we come short, as we surely shall, what then? "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Thus we are to continue "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." This does not mean that we are to keep from ever getting any spot or wrinkle upon our garments; for we could not avoid so doing. But God's wonderful arrangement is that we may come to Him and claim the merit of the blood of the Saviour who died for us. We need not permit a spot or wrinkle to remain so as to blemish our glorious wedding robe. When we first came into the Father's family we received merit to cover all our *past sins;* but we have weaknesses and sins of the *present*, and we need the blood for these also. Thus the Lord has provided for our need. With this knowledge of the love of the Father and of our Lord Jesus, we are to come boldly—courageously—to the throne of Heavenly Grace.

Some may feel that it is rather presumptuous to come thus to the Lord for continual cleansing from all earthly defilement, for the forgiveness of our daily unwitting transgressions. But we are instructed to the contrary by the Apostle. We need the encouragement of God's Word thus to come to the Lord to be forgiven. The flesh says, "Do not go very often to the Throne of Grace." When we first made a mistake it was comparatively easy to take it to the Lord. We came without much difficulty, or perhaps without any. We told the Lord that our transgression was not wilful, and that we were sorry; and we realized His forgiveness. But the second time it was not so easy; and it becomes more difficult the oftener we have to come, every time we sin. We told Him at first that we would try to be *more careful;* yet we continued perhaps to come short of the standard which we recognized. So we were tempted not to come to God with the matter.

NEVER PRESUME UPON GOD'S MERCY

We all need to refresh our minds with the promises for our encouragement in continuing to come for mercy and grace to help in every time of need. Thus we are made stronger for the difficulties of the future. We are not, however, to presume upon the mercy of the Lord by becoming measurably careless as to our words and thoughts and deeds: for if the Lord sees anything of this spirit, He will not readily forgive us and restore us to favor. He will withhold the assurance of His forgiveness; and we may come to Him again and again before we realize the sense of His love and blessing. This will make us more careful not to be thus derelict another time.

The condition of those who fail to keep their record clean before the Lord is a very sad one. After the first or second offense they say to themselves, "I cannot go to the Lord again; I will go to sleep and forget it." They wake up in the morning out of harmony with God. But they think, "Well, I cannot help it." At night the thought that all is not right with the Lord comes again. "I know that I have had plenty of difficulties today and more failures; but I cannot go to God. It is of no use." So the breach widens. They forget the great mercy of the Lord. They forget that He has said, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust."

This is a wrong course, fraught with extreme danger. We should clean up our accounts with the Lord every day. We should retire every night just as we should wish to do if we knew that we would not wake up in the flesh. In the morning before we arise our first thought should be, "How can I please the Lord today and be helpful to others, and especially how can I overcome myself?" Some who fail to take advantage of the grace offered for every time of need gradually get so far off from the Lord that by and by they scarcely think about it any longer. They have a reverence for God, but they do not love Him. He is not close to them, ***and they know it.*** They know the right way, but they feel that they cannot walk in it. They realize that they have spots on their robe, but they try to put the thought behind them. If this course continues, ***where will it end?***

These are not the things to put behind us. The things that the Lord has ***forgiven*** should be put behind us; but the things for which we have not sought forgiveness should trouble us until they are settled. It is not a good plan to wait until evening to go to the Lord if we realize that we have displeased Him. If we can go to our closet at once we should do so. If not, we might close our eyes for a moment and go into communication with our Father in Heaven through the merits of our Saviour. Let us keep in constant touch with the Lord, and tell Him about all our affairs, our mistakes, our unwitting trespasses. There are probably many trespasses committed by us that we do not recognize. But daily application for the blood of cleansing will keep our garments clean and white.

CARELESS ONES UNFIT FOR THE KINGDOM

Those who get spots upon their robes and leave them there will not be fit for the Kingdom of God: for the Bride of Christ will be composed of only those who will be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Jesus is to present this class blameless and unreproveable before the Father. They did not walk perfectly, without a blemish; but they were careful to keep their garments unspotted by going often to the Lord. They let nothing keep them away. This is the spirit of the Bride class. We each wish to be of that class, dear friends. If any of us are not sure just now as to our standing with the Lord, let us make haste to go to Him and see that the record is cleared by our dear Redeemer and Advocate. Let us not wait, but go at once.

The faithful class is pictured to us in Revelation 7:3, 4, and 14:1-5. These are the 144,000 who have the Father's name in their foreheads. They sing the new song, which none can sing but these 144,000. Oh, we long to be among them! We cannot afford to be anywhere else. . . . It will be ***our own fault*** if we miss the Kingdom. ***There will be no blame to attach to the Lord;*** for He has arranged for our continual cleansing day by day. His grace is provided for us at every step of the way; and His loving, protecting providences are continually about us if we are trustful and obedient to the best of our ability.

The other class who allow spots to accumulate upon their robes, is a "great multitude, whose number no man knoweth." (Revelation 7:9); that is, they are not of an ordained or ***fixed number*** as is the Bride class. These must through great tribulation wash their robes, all spotted and soiled, in the blood of the Lamb. These will then stand before the Throne, will serve God day and night in His Temple. The Bride class will be the Temple; or, in another figure, they will be seated upon the Messianic Throne with their Lord and Bridegroom. These different figures give different phases of the honored position and work of the Body of Christ in glory. These are spoken of as wearing crowns, the others as merely carrying palm branches, indicating final victory.

How glad we are that our dear Heavenly Father has mercifully provided for those who through lack of sufficient zeal and faithfulness lose the "Prize of the High Calling"! We rejoice that even the "foolish virgins" do not lose all, but will through tears and travail of soul yet come wholly back to the Lord. They will finish their course in death. Theirs is an enforced destruction of the flesh. Although they covenanted to sacrifice it willingly, yet they failed to do so. They love the Lord and love righteousness, but not sufficiently to be thoroughly loyal and faithful; and so they must be severely scourged, that their spirits may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus.

EARNEST EXHORTATION TO FAITHFULNESS

No one has been called of God to the Great Company lass. "We are all called in one hope of our calling." Let us hen walk with the Lord in white every day, dear brethren nd sisters. Let us keep our robes spotless. It is easier to et spots on them than to get the spots off, and each spot ill be more difficult than the previous one. We understand pots to be the result of a measure of carelessness. "It is mpossible for me to keep my robe from ever getting spotted," say, "but I am very thankful that the Lord has provided a way whereby the spots may be removed when I earnestly apply for the cleansing."

Each experience of this kind should make us more humble, more careful, more alive to our weaknesses and more watchful to avoid getting spots on our white robes. Otherwise the Lord will chastise us by withholding for a time His peace, lest we think that we may be careless, and then may have the spot removed without any trouble. The Lord wishes us to realize that this is no light matter. Then let us each be very faithful, that we may soon hear the Master's sweet "Well done."—Z. '16:211-213.

"WHO IS WORTHY?"

Isa 2-8-10-19 [illegible] affirmed

Jesus said, "If a man will come after me, let him deny imself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 23.) At the very beginning of our course we each found me cross confronting us, and had we not taken it up we ould not have been counted worthy even to look with intelligent appreciation into the precious truths of God's plan. nd as we advance from step to step and find the truth increasingly precious—sweeter than honey from the honey comb —we may have these additional evidences of continued orthiness and should greatly rejoice in them as such. . . .

But "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he all"; for sudden and sharp will be many of the tests applied prove our continued faithfulness. The world, the flesh nd the devil all conspire to allure, ensnare and overcome us. he world will present its allurements through friends or ife or husband or children. *They will try to encroach upon he clearly defined line which you have drawn between yourelf and the world.* Then the flesh will grow weary in fighting the good fight of faith, weary of the reproaches of the orld, weary of the alienation of former friends and weary f the self-denying, sacrificing and daily cross-bearing life. hen if you turn aside for a moment to ponder on these hings the devil will quickly see his opportunity and will cunningly devise some trial specially suited to your peculiar ondition of mind, and a crisis comes in your experience, the esult of which will prove the exact strength of your devotion o God and His truth. These tests God permits *and even desires* to have come upon us, in order that we may be thoroughly tried and proved either worthy or unworthy of the great reward He has in keeping for those who remain faithful unto death.

The Lord is seeking his precious jewels. Many of them are indeed diamonds in the rough. The real diamond is a noble, loyal, faithful character, devoted and UNCOMPROMISING IN ITS ALLEGIANCE TO GOD. Sometimes the circumstances of life have deprived such of education r culture and have left them only sufficient means for the earest necessities of life. But no matter, God's eye is on hem; character is what He is looking for, and in due time, when that character is sufficiently developed, confirmed, tested and proved worthy of exaltation, He can and will add o it all the glories of knowledge and wisdom and grace and eauty. But first He will subject it to all the necessary tests. it is a true diamond it will receive and it will also transmit others the light of divine truth. Nothing so gloriously reects the light as the diamond; and nothing so gloriously reflects the truth as the *worthy character* of the true and faithful saint.

Another way of testing a diamond is to put it under pressure. If it is a real diamond it will stand the pressure, for the diamond is the hardest substance known; but if it is not a real diamond it will go to pieces and thus prove itself. So God allows us to come under the constant pressure of years of toil and care and self-sacrifice to see how we will endure; and blessed is that diamond-proved character that endures to the end.—Jas. 1:12; Matt. 10:22.

Sometimes the tests come in the way of trials of faith, and we are called upon to prove ourselves whether we be in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5) when some subtle errors are presented to us as *advanced truth.* But if we know the voice of the "Good Shepherd" we will not be easily beguiled. We remember the inspired counsel, "To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is not light in them" (Isa. 8:20); and to the law and the testimony we go, and, relying implicitly upon this as the infallible teaching of the Spirit of God, we are enabled to arrive at definite, clear and positive doctrine. We are not left in doubt as to what is truth, but are enabled to give a solid Scriptural reason for the hope that is in us, on which hope we dare implicitly to rest our faith and with humble boldness to successfully withstand the assaults of error. *But O! how dead to selfish ambition, how fully devoted to the will of God such must be.*

Let us, dearly beloved, as we realize that thus far God has counted us worthy to look upon the scroll of His plan which has been unsealed for us by our blessed Lord Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, prove our worthiness to continue to look therein and to read the wondrous things of His law, by faithful obedience and loyalty to it in all things. Let us not undervalue our great privilege in being counted worthy to suffer some reproach and some hardness as good soldiers for the truth's sake; and also in being counted worthy to have some part in the blessed ministry of reflecting the light of divine truth; let us prove ourselves jewels of rarest value, diamonds indeed, heartily receiving and beautifully transmitting to others the light of truth, and faithfully enduring the severest pressure that God may permit to come upon us; for, if faithful in these small things, we shall in due time be counted worthy also to reign with Christ in power and great glory. Let us not be like some who have only a little good earth on the surface of their hearts while the heart is really hard and stony. Let the good seed of divine truth sink down and take deep root, and then let it branch out in the life and bear its abundant fruitage to the Master's glory. So shall we be accounted worthy to see the King in His beauty and to live and reign with Him as His beloved bride and joint-heir. And when to the "worthy Lamb that was slain" the voice of the multitude ascribes blessing and honor and glory and power, they will also exclaim, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."—Rev. 5:13; 19:7. Z. '92:135-136.

Every trial, *every* temptation, is a *special* trial, a *special* temptation. No one *knows whither the smallest temptation may lead.* The Scriptures warn us to take heed; for what may seem a *small* matter may lead to something *great.* The fact that a thing may seem small does not imply that it may not be the most serious event of our whole life.—Z. '13:85.

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God permits them to *send* strong delusions to lead away from the light all such as, after coming to a knowledge of the Truth, do not *love* it so as to be willing to die for it.—2 Thess. 2-10, 11.

Such as fall away under these delusions are thereby shown to be "*condemned*" as unworthy a share in the Kingdom of the elect—none such will escape, for the deceptions will be so strong that "if it were possible they would deceive the very elect." But the deception of the elect, the faithful, will not be possible: God knoweth them that are his—who meekly abide under the wedding-garment of Christ's imputed righteousness and who are daily seeking to be the more conformed to the image of God's dear Son. All others shall be deceived and led astray from the truth, being unworthy of it—who have pleasure in error and who have not that pleasure in the truth which *gladly* endures hardness and persecution for its sake. *If one error does not* overcome such, the persistent adversary will be permitted to bring another and another. He will surely find some seeming messenger of light to bear to such a deceptive doctrine, to ensnare such as reject the favor of God, expressed in the sacrifice for sins once for all.

And let us remember that a preparation for thus leaving the foundation and getting ready for the deception is laid beforehand, always. Instead of the truth leading such to humble service of the truth, it leads to pride or to carelessness and worldliness, or to that *idle* curiosity which, while willing and curious to know the present and the future, never leads to its service; or, neglecting the Word of truth, they fall into purely human reasoning and, getting a theory, start to twist the Scriptures to fit the theory; or imbibe some of the worldly ambitions to be thought well of, to be considered liberal-minded and very charitable to every thing, whether it be truth or error, and to every one who claims to be a teacher, whether he teach the true gospel or a base and deceptive counterfeit. All possessing such a self-seeking, ***compromising*** spirit are not worthy of the truth, and must go back into the outer darkness, whether we wish so or not. Some of the many deceptions and snares will overcome all such.

Or should we become listless and indifferent in the service of the truth and have consecrated time on our hands which we are willing to occupy in other ways than as we have covenanted to do, the adversary will find some convenient method of occupying the time and some *plausible* excuse for so doing, wherewith to silence conscience; and to such a covenant-breaker will soon be sent a strong delusion, because he is not a lover (server) of the truth.—Z. '92: 24, 25.

This is no time to shirk the question or ***half-heartedly to watch the battle*** between truth and error, content to know that you yourself see the truth clearly and favor it in your heart. This is no time to fear to own the cross, lest its growing unpopularity should rupture some earthly ties and bring you the disapprobation of those you have loved and esteemed. It is a time, on the contrary, to be esteemed and used as a precious occasion for showing our dear Redeemer our loyalty to him and his Word, and our willingness, if need be, to break every tender tie, except that which binds us to him. The present is such an emergency as develops strength and courage in the true soldier of the cross, who appreciates the opportunity of enduring scoffs and misrepresentations for Christ's sake.

In the history of the nation of Israel, which typified the Church of Christ, we find that when a battle raged between Israel and those who typified errorists now, those who "went not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty" were cursed or condemned instead of praised or blessed after the victory had been won (Judges 5:23), even though they took no active part in opposition to God's cause. So in the present conflict: those who fail to lift up heart and pen and voice and every talent possessed, on the Lord's side of the question, will not be reckoned among the overcomers who get the victory under the Lord's direction.—Z. Nov. '90:2.

Another Scripture, speaking of our Lord's present exaltation, declares that he is exalted "far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named." (Eph. 1:21.) We believe these Scriptures, and in harmony with them we believe that God's character for justice and benevolence is demonstrated by this high exaltation of him who was faithful unto death as the man Christ Jesus. He is now a partaker of the divine nature, a spirit being of the very highest order—of the same order with the Father himself. This thought of our dear Redeemer not losing eventually by the great sacrifices he endured for us must be gratifying to all who are truly his and who love him. But, additionally, we have another source of satisfaction in thinking of our Master's glorification, and that is that the promise is to us who are faithful to him, that we may yet share his nature, share his glory, share his name, share his exaltation, share his divine nature. O, wonderful wisdom and grace and goodness of our God! We call upon our souls with every power within us to praise and laud and magnify his great and holy name, honored before his people through his great and wonderful plan, revealed to his people through his Wonderful Word!—Z. '04-174.

To whatever extent the Christian cultivates faith, hope, and love, to that extent he is cultivating that which will be eternal. Among these three Love stands first. There is an important sense in which Faith will fail; for when Faith shall be swallowed up in sight, there will not be the need of its exercise that now exists. There is also an important sense in which Hope will cease. For when that which is perfect shall have come, when Hope is lost in full fruition, we shall not need to hope as now. As St. Paul says, "For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" We shall continue to have hope in that we shall always be looking forward to glories to come: and we shall exercise Faith in that we shall never lose confidence in the Lord and His goodness and faithfulness or in one another; but Faith and Hope will not be necessary in the same sense as now. Love, however, will never fail in any sense or degree, but will only enlarge and deepen. "Love never faileth"; it is a characteristic of God Himself, and every perfect being will be an embodiment of this glorious quality. Those possessing the Divine nature will have it to the fullest degree, in its highest attainment.—Z. '15-313.

The reason that the Church is called on to "fill up that which is behind the afflictions of Christ" is, that all the body, in like manner to the Head, may be trained to perfect sympathy and to perfect obedience through suffering. In this present time, we in all our troubles come to our compassionate High Priest with boldness, realizing that he, having been partaker of flesh and blood, can truly feel for us and pity us: so in the age to come, the Church, the promised seed of

Abraham, through whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Compare Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:14, 16, 29) shall go forth a royal priesthood, according to the order of Melchisedec, fully prepared to sympathize with the nations, to lead them to the paths of righteousness, and to encourage them in the way of life.

Shall we shrink, then, from our cross? Shall we seek to put away the bitter cup that is sometimes pressed to our lips? Surely not. 'Tis a loving hand that presents it, 'tis a loving heart (infinitely loving) that sees the need of it. It is but the Master fitting us for his work; training us for the priesthood; teaching us to rule ourselves that we may know how to rule others; opening our eyes to the weakness of our own flesh, that we may have patience with those over whom we shall be given authority. (Luke 19:7, 19.)

Courage, then, my Christian brother or sister, seeking with weary steps to run the narrow way. Heed not the rugged course; it is all hallowed and sanctified by the blessed feet of the Master.—Z. Sept. '84:4.

That terrible spiritual ogre, *Temptation*, seldom attacks a truly contented mind, for we are "tempted when drawn away of our own sinful desire and enticed."

Discontent can even have hard thoughts of the devil if he is not on hand with some first-class temptation when wanted.

It may be asked, Can we control our thoughts and keep them in the proper channel? Can we prevent evil thoughts from coming into our minds? Apropos to this, my mother used to tell me, "You cannot hinder the birds from flying around your head, but you need not allow them to build nests in your hair."

Paul, who kept his body under by the aid of a pure and vigorous mind, and by the spirit of grace, speaks of bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. We can keep our minds pure and free by constantly putting pure, clean food for reflection into them. As a sack filled with wheat has little room for chaff or other refuse, so the mind that is stored with good things cannot harbor evil thoughts.

The Lord has surrounded us with good things in which we may labor, of which we may read and converse, and about which we may exercise our thoughts.

Therefore, "whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—Z. Oct. '84:2.

Let us apply to our own hearts, the lessons that evil is insidious, and that every parting of the ways, every leaving of the divine path, signifies a separation from righteousness *to a degree we are unable to estimate at the beginning.* Let us learn that the only safe course to pursue is to trust in the Lord and to be glad to have whatever his providences may mark out for us, and to refuse to have anything contrary to his will, however desirable it might be, however gratifying to human ambition. Let us learn the lesson that ambition is a dangerous thing—especially in our present imperfect condition, where our judgments are more or less warped from the fall, where our knowledge is imperfect and where Satan is sure to put light for darkness and darkness for light. Our ambitions must be curbed, yea, every thought must be brought into subjection to the will of God in Christ, if we would be on safe ground as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.—Z. '04-189.

Error and everything pertaining to it is always crafty, insidious. Temptations to wrong doing are rarely presented in an open, blunt manner—usually they come clothed in the garments of light and associating themselves with something sacred, claiming to be for spiritual advancement.—Z. '04-188.

It is well to keep in mind that the robe does not cover, as some seem to think, sins of the *new mind.* The Scriptures ascribe *no sin* to the new mind, and *no perfection* in righteousness to the fallen flesh. If the *new mind* were disloyal to God, the robe would not cover it; it would cease to be a new mind. To continue to have the imperfections of the flesh (which we have inherited from Adam) covered, the New Creature must remain loyal to God; otherwise, it will deserve the Second Death. Hence, these New Creatures, with imperfect bodies under the control of the new mind, have the Bridal Robe granted to them, that they may have a standing in the sight of the Lord and of each other.—Z. '11-189.

Our Lord assures us that if the MAIN THOUGHT of our hearts is concerning His service and the promotion of righteousness and the attainment of the Kingdom which God has promised to them that love Him, then we need carry no anxious cares respecting the future. As His disciples we shall have trials and tribulations enough day by day, and shall need daily to lean upon the Bridegroom's arm as we seek to walk the "narrow Way." Sufficient for each day will be the evil of itself; and thanks be to God, we have also His promise that daily His grace shall be sufficient for us.—Z. '11:345.

We are assured in the Holy Word that if we are faithful to our God under present unfavorable conditions and environments, if we are loyal to the principles of Truth and righteousness and to our Covenant of Sacrifice made to Him, we shall have quite a conflict with ourselves and with the sins that are entrenched in our mortal bodies. He tells us, too, that such loyalty to Him will bring persecution and misunderstanding, because of the condition of darkness which now envelopes the world of mankind. Yes, we well know that our faithful endeavor to serve the Lord and His Truth will now bring opposition from the world, from our own flesh, and from the great Adversary and all his hosts of darkness; for all these are leagued against us as followers of Christ—our Saviour, our leader, our Pattern.—Z. '15-356.

The Lamb's Book of Life we must understand to include only those who attain to the position of joint-heirship with Christ, those whose names are written in Heaven during this Gospel Age and who are faithful to their Covenant (Psalm 50:5). What an incentive we have here to faithfulness! What a warning against the *slightest sympathy with anything unclean, untrue, or in anywise contrary to the Divine standard of holiness!* If we appreciate the glorious Divine provision for the Church and for the world, these promises will have their influence upon us; and under that influence we shall strive to keep our garments unspotted from the world, to be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that thus we may abide in our Lord's love, and in the due time be "meet for the inheritance of the saints." Col. 1:12-14; Heb. 4:14-16. Z. '16:394.

The Lord looketh at the heart, and if he sees there *full devotion to himself*, he is pleased to grant to such his blessing, his aid, saying, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "My grace is sufficient for thee—my strength is made perfect in weakness."—Z. '04-139.

We believe that even the most humble, the most faithful, the most zealous to be servants of the cause, have *continued* need to be on their guard.—Z. '04-140.

The Special Messenger to the Last Age of the Church.—(1874-1918) Rev. 3:14.

"The deep mysteries of faith are not given to the lukewarm and the idle, but to those who are 'watching thereunto, with all perseverance and supplication,' and who make no bargain as to the way the Lord shall lead them."—Z. Feb. '86:7.

Warning voices and wholesome counsel are also necessary; and he is not wise who turns a deaf ear to them, and takes cognizance alone of the comforting assurances which are designed *only for those who* faithfully "watch and pray lest they enter into temptation."—Z. '04:74.

The Wise Man that Delivered the Little City.—Eccl. 9:15.

INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in His dear name!

Your favor of the 8th gladly received. How dear to our hearts are words of encouragement from those whom we know the Lord is using for that very purpose. I realize fully, dear Brethren, that words of admonition and comfort and cheer are more needful now than ever before in our Christian experience, and our needs are being supplied. All praise and honor to His holy name!

I notice from "Old Corn Gems" just received that Brothers Hadley and Livermore will be with us the 26th and 27th. We cannot express our joy but you know just how rejoiced we are. Yes, dear Brethren, we see the clouds growing darker, but He who has control of them holds our hands and will not let us go. He says that nothing shall come to us greater than we can bear and with every temptation will provide a way of escape. How precious are His promises to us. Let us hold fast even unto the end of the way. . . .

Dear Brethren, I could write on and on, but must not. May the Lord continue to lead, guide and direct you is my daily prayer.

Your sister by His grace, —Texas.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in our Master's name!

The little class of Stand Fast Bible Students in Southern California are rejoicing in the Lord. We very greatly enjoyed the visit of dear Brother ——— a short time ago, and will be glad to see him again at any time the Lord may be pleased to send him.

We are delighted to see in the last issue of the "Old Corn Gems" (No. 18) that Brothers Hadley and Livermore expect to visit us early in November. Will look forward with pleasure to their coming, and pray for God's richest blessing upon the contemplated meetings during their stay.

With sincere Christian love, your servant in Christ.

—Calif.

Dear Brethren:

I thank our dear Heavenly Father that we are privileged to have the "Old Corn Gems" at this time. They are certainly "meat in due season," a very present help in time of need, and I pray that you may continue to send out messages of Truth in His dear name.

Your Brother, —Canada.

Dear Brother:

Greetings in His dear name!

Just a word about the grand Convention here. The Secretary was instructed to convey, by vote of the Convention, our token of appreciation to the Committee for their efforts, by the grace of our Lord, to make another Convention possible to us. . . .

The message brought by the dear Brothers Hadley and Livermore was simply grand, but as is naturally to be expected its full import is appreciated by only a part.

Well, dear Brother, I feel almost like I know you personally through your loving ministrations, and it will be my great joy to meet you soon, as Sister and I expect to be out there shortly.

Your Brother by His grace, —Minneapolis.

Dear Brother:

I often long to do something to show my love and appreciation for the labors of those in charge of the affairs of the Stand Fast movement, and I am so glad that I can and always do pray for you all. There are no words to express my continued joy in the precious Truth, and I pray constantly for more appreciation, more faith, and more spiritual discernment; and the Lord is answering with such an abundance of blessing. Praise the Lord for the Stand Fast movement, for the "Old Corn Gems," and for the sweet fellowship of His saints.

The Lord bless and keep you. . .Sister ——— Canada.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Greetings in His name. We surely appreciated your good letter of the 19th but the friends were sorely disappointed at only getting one "Gem." Was this all you could spare us, or did you get the impression from my letter that I was the only one Standing here? I am very sorry if you thought that for there are at least seven others seemingly Standing as firmly as myself. . . .

We are surely rejoicing at the prospect of hearing Brothers Palmer and Hadley again, or at least one of them. We had hardly expected to see them again. But how like our Heavenly Father! He is always sending us such sweet surprises.

We believe the Stand Fast movement has about (no not about, it has) accomplished the work whereunto it was sent, the calling out and drawing together of God's dear saints, and now naturally it will decrease. All there is left now is the comforting of one another, and this is surely a sweet service. We have this much that our dear Lord did not have for it is said of Him, "there was none with Him."

I have been feasting on the old "Towers" for two weeks. Truly each of us have the crib in our own house—the Volumes, Towers and other things from "that wise and faithful servant."

If it was a misunderstanding about the "Gems" please send us —— more, and if it was not we will pass this one around and thank our Heavenly Father for that.

I am sending you the love of all the dear saints. . . .

Your Sister by His grace, —Ill.

N. B.—We might state here that if any of the friends do not receive their alloted number of "Gems" at any time, we would appreciate a card from them to that effect, as sometimes such mistakes are made in this office, and without your notifying us we would not know but that you had received your regular supply.—Stand Fast Bible Students.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

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“FEAR NOT LITTLE FLOCK”

“FEAR not, little flock,” says the prospective bridegroom of the Church, “for it is your Father's **good pleasure** to give you the Kingdom,” “for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God.” Nor will he give the Kingdom to his beloved grudgingly; for Peter says, “an entrance shall be ministered unto you **abundantly**”; there will be a glorious welcome, a joyous greeting and a coronation jubilee among all the heavenly hosts when the laurels of victory are placed upon the heads of all the overcoming soldiers of the cross, the heroes who nobly fought the good fight of faith—who kept the faith, fought the fight against the world, the flesh and the devil, and finished their course in faithfulness even unto death.

All this abundance of grace and glory is the possible inheritance of even the weakest saint who, trusting not to his own ability to make his calling the election sure, humbly looks to God for strength from day to day to endure hardness as a good soldier. If any man attempts to do this in his own strength, he must surely fail: for the **fiery trial** that is to try **every one** will prove too much for the mind of the flesh; but God who worketh in the consecrated to will and to do his good pleasure, will so fortify and equip those who depend upon his grace, that, with the Psalmist, they can say, “It is God that girdeth me with strength. . . . By thee I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall”; and with Paul, “I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me.”—Psa. 18:32, 29; Phil. 4:13. Z. '97:146.

LORD, THIS VOW THAT I HAVE TAKEN

Heavenly Father, I adore Thee! Hallowed be thy holy name;
Mighty angels bow before thee, Should not mortals do the same?
May thy rule of love control me, And thy will in me be done.
Hear the Vow I make before thee, in the name of Christ, thy Son.

Refrain:
Lord, this Vow, that I have taken, I could never keep alone.
When I think of self, I tremble; When I look to thee I'm strong.

Daily will I pray, remember, All thy faithful saints dear Lord,
Those who STAND unmoved, confessing, All the precepts of thy Word.
And the blessed work of comfort, On the part of those who try,
Midst the flood of strong delusion, Still to hold thy banner high.

O'er my thoughts, and words and actions, I a closer watch will keep,
That I may be used more freely, In the feeding of Thy Sheep.
Oh, I want Thy word to cleanse me, By its power to set me free,
From all earthly imperfections, And to make me more like thee.

Lord, I know the pow'rs of evil Are increasing every day;
Trying to ensnare and hinder Those who walk the narrow way.
Never will I listen to them; Lord, I fear their subtle pow'r.
From their ev'ry snare protect me, Help me, keep, ev'ry hour.
Lord, in all my daily dealings, Towards my brethren in the Truth,
I will not by word or action Do what Thou wouldst not approve.
Purity shall mark my conduct; Chaste in tho't and word I'll be,
That the image of my Master May be perfected in me.

Refrain:
Leaning on thee, in my weakness, Trusting thee for promised grace,
I will take this Vow and keep it, Till I see thee face to face.

At the Convention held in Victoria, B.C., October 11-13, 1919, the above rendering of the Vow Song was accepted and the following rendering of the second clause in the Vow was considered appropriate.

“Daily will I remember at the throne of Heavenly Grace, the general interests of the Saints everywhere, and particularly the activities incident to their comfort and standing fast in this day of strong delusion, and the privilege I may have in sharing in this work.”

ANNOUNCEMENT

Many friends in different parts of the United States and Canada are making arrangements to attend the GENERAL CONVENTION of Stand Fast Bible Students at Seattle, Wash., December 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 1919, and January 1st, 1920. Address all communications in reference to the General Convention to Brother H. J. Brown, 1424 South 12th Street, Tacoma, Wash., Treasurer of General Convention.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Cannan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18: 51.

Confession of Sin Essential to Forgiveness

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John, 1: 9.

THE Apostle John in writing this Epistle clearly states his object, saying, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." It is a noteworthy fact that the vast majority of Christians never experience the **fulness** of joy, peace and blessing that they might possess. Too many are content with simply DILUTED FIRST PRINCIPLES of the doctrine of Christ. Therefore, as the Apostle Paul declares, such are merely "babes in Christ." (1 Corinthians, 3: 1, 2; Hebrews 5: 12-14.) Of course, they have a blessing in any relationship to the Lord, but they have not the fulness of joy which would be theirs if they progressed in grace and in knowledge to the full stature of a man in Christ. The object of the Apostle's writing them was to stir up the pure minds of believers to an appreciation and enjoyment of their privileges, that thereby they might grow and develop.

The Apostle follows the example of our Lord Jesus in symbolizing truth and righteousness as Light, and sin and every evil as so much of opposing Darkness. God Himself thus considered would be the very perfection of Light—"in Him is no darkness," no sin, no imperfection. With this thought before the mind, the Apostle points out that any growth of fellowship with God to which we may aspire must be along the lines of goodness, purity, and that it would be sin for us to say to others or to imagine in our own hearts that we are walking with God and having fellowship with Him, if our course of life is a dark, a sinful one. Such are merely deceiving themselves and others. They are not deceiving God, and they are not getting the blessings enjoyed by those who "walk in the light."

Moreover, to the extent that we walk in the light and in harmony and fellowship with God, we shall find ourselves in fellowship with all others who are like-minded. So then, if we do not "love the brethren whom we have seen," so as to be able to have fellowship and spiritual pleasure with them, it would be an indication that we are not wholly in harmony and fellowship with God.

But who are the "brethren"? Our Lord tells us that not all who profess His name are true brethren. He says, "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (be recognized as His brethren and joint-heirs), but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." We thus see that it is by our **deeds**, and not merely by our **professions**, that we are accepted of the Lord. Again He says, "Who are My brethren? Verily, I say unto you, He that doeth the will of My Father, the same is My brother."—Matthew 7: 21; 12: 48-50.

We are not, therefore, to anticipate "fellowship" with all who name the name of Christ as a proof of fellowship with the Father, and that we are in the light. We are merely to anticipate this **true** fellowship with those who are earnestly seeking to do the Father's will, to serve His cause and exemplify the instructions of His Word, in their **deeds** as well as in their professions. Between all such there must be, whether hidden or open, a **bond of fellowship** and union. That bond is the one faith and one baptism into the one Lord.

Shortcomings and Faults Are Sins

But while this fellowship between us and our Lord and all who have His Spirit is based upon our walking in the light, our following in His footsteps to the extent of our ability, nevertheless it does not imply absolute freedom from the imperfections of sin. Although under our Grace Covenant arrangement nothing is charged up to us as sin except in proportion as it has been **wilfully** done, nevertheless, because of the manifold temptations and the weakness of our flesh, the result of inherited predisposition toward sin, it is impossible for us to avoid shortcomings and faults. These may properly be termed **sins**, as in our text; for "sin is a transgression of the Law," however **unintentional** it may be.

But the Divine arrangement under the Grace Covenant, on behalf of the Lord's people, is that these unintentional faults and shortcomings need not be charged up against us as sins; but may instead be cleansed away upon our application to the great High Priest, through the merit of the precious blood. Thus it is that the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord cleanseth us from all sin—keeps us clean from sin, if we continually make application for forgiveness because of realization of imperfections of our flesh.

An Insidious Snare of the Adversary

Further on in this Epistle, the Apostle uses the word "sin" in a different sense from the above, saying, "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him nor (even) known Him. . . . He that committeth sin is of the Devil. . . . Whosoever is begotten of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in Him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." Again he says: "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that Wicked One toucheth him not."—1 John, 3:6-9; 5:18.

In these passages the Apostle uses the word "sin" in its full or absolute sense, meaning **wilful** sin, deliberate sin, intentional sin—not merely shortcomings and faults, due largely or wholly to the imperfections of the flesh, inherited from our ancestors. No one, the Apostle assures us, who has been begotten of the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of holiness and truth, could have any sympathy with sin so as to wilfully, knowingly and intentionally engage therein. All who so love sin and wilfully do it and approve it after they have a knowledge of the Truth, are children of darkness, who love darkness and who thus show that they have the spirit, or disposition of Satan.

Injustice to the Brethren Inexcusable

At first thought, many may be inclined to say, "Well, I am in no danger of that sin; for I am sure that I would not commit sin wilfully, intentionally, designedly." But let us notice, dear friends, that **there is a way in which sin may come upon us without being at the time a wilful sin, but which later might become wilful sin.** For instance, any transgression committed, either in total ignorance or with only a partial acquiescence of our wills, might become a full, wilful, deliberate sin **afterward**, if we should come to a clear knowledge of the truth respecting the subject, and fail to repent of it to the Lord and to undo so far as is in our power the wrong toward our fellow-creatures. To consent to a sin clearly and fully understood simply because at the time of its committal we were in ignorance, and to refuse to make amends for it, and thus endorse the sin intelligently, would appear to make of it a **will-ful** sin.

With this view of the matter, the children of God cannot afford to sanction in their own minds even the slightest injustice or untruth toward each other, or toward **any**. The essence of this thought is found in our Lord's command: "If thou comest to the altar (if we have anything to offer to the Lord, either of service or of worship or of thanks), and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee (that some one has been wronged by you, either in word or thought or act) leave there thy gift before the altar (do not think that it will be acceptable to God while in your heart or outwardly you are practising injustice toward others;) first go and be reconciled to thy brother (make amends to him, apologies, explanations in full, of whatever injury you have done him,) and then come and offer thy gift (assured that in such an attitude of heart the Lord Almighty will be pleased to accept your gift."—Matthew 5:23, 24.

In describing those who sin wilfully, the Apostle Paul uses very strong, figurative language, declaring that inasmuch as they are in heart-sympathy with sin, and not in opposition to it, they are opponents of the Son of God, who was so out of sympathy with sin in its every form that He laid down His life to redeem us from its power and curse. The Apostle declares that such wilful sinners may be esteemed as the enemies of Christ, who really trample Him and His goodness and love under their feet, figuratively, disdaining His mercy and favor as well as His instruction in righteousness. He says that inasmuch as they were once sanctified, as a result of their faith in the precious blood and its cleansing from sin, their turning now into harmony with sin would imply that they now disesteem the atoning blood, counting it not a sacred thing, but common—these do despite to the spirit of Divine favor which had held out to them freedom from the yoke of sin and ultimate release from its penalty, death, and the attainment, as the Lord's people, of the crown of life eternal.—Hebrews 10:26-29.

Confession of Sin Precedes Forgiveness

But let us return to the consideration of the other use of the word "sin" as found in our context, and apply the terms to the faults and imperfections which God's people are zealously striving against, seeking to stamp out of their mortal bodies, and against which they are continually fighting a good fight and coming off conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him who loved them and bought them with His precious blood. The Apostle intimates that there is danger that some will go to the extreme of denying that they have any faults, and thus deceive themselves and get into a snare of the Adversary.

It may be asked, What difference can it make if they are seeking to live godly, whether they claim to live perfectly, or admit that they are imperfect and apply continually for cleansing through the precious blood? We reply that it makes a great deal of difference. Only as we confess our sins can they be forgiven. Consequently, those who deny that they have any sins, faults, imperfections, have a great load of them uncancelled, unforgiven, charged up against them; and because of this they would be accounted unworthy to be taken further along in the path of light, under the lead of the Holy Spirit, into the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love and wisdom of God, revealed in His Word as meat in due season for the Household of Faith.

Thus we see that there is but one proper course of faith and conduct in which we may have a complete fellowship with the Lord. Those who take any other course are making God a liar; and He would not fellowship with them, but will leave them to the darkness of their own way. Can we wonder, then, that so many are in darkness and lack evidences of fellowship with God when we see how few confess their faults and seek to overcome them and to be cleansed in the only way of Divine appointment and approval?

These things are written not to cultivate in us the thought that we may sin with impunity, may be overtaken with faults through carelessness and inattention to the Divine Word, and then go to the Lord for forgiveness. Quite to the contrary, these assurances of Divine favor and willingness to forgive are designed to have upon our hearts a mellowing influence which will make us all the more careful to avoid sin and to maintain fellowship with Him who is the perfection of light and holiness. "These things are written that we sin not"—that we become not boastful of self, self-righteous, self-justified, and thus abominable in the Lord's sight; but that, fleeing from our weaknesses and imperfections, we lay hold upon the grace of God in Christ for their forgiveness, and for grace and strength to fight a good fight against sin. . . .

The Test of Obedience

The Apostle seems to intimate in the Epistle from which our text is taken that quite a good number may claim an intimate knowledge of God falsely. Hence with great plainness of speech he informs us that, "He that saith I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in Him." It is thus very evident that the Apostle does not mean merely a knowledge about God, but an intimate knowledge of God, implying fellowship and communion with Him. He then gives us a test by which we may judge accordingly whether or not we are New Creatures in the Lord and have the love of God developed in us to any extent. The test is obedience. In proportion as we keep the Lord's Word, in like proportion the love of God is perfected in us; for if we have received the mind of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the effect will be to cause us to will and do His good pleasure—to the extent of ability.

This ability should be continually on the increase year by year. And although we may not hope to be perfected until we shall be "changed" and granted our new resurrection bodies, nevertheless, all the while we may keep so close to the Lord in the spirit of our minds that we may have continual fellowship with Him, and by confessing our faults and seeking His forgiveness we may continue to the end of our journey clean from sin, even though we must still acknowledge the imperfections of the flesh—that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection.—Z. '16: 243-245.

Complete Consecration Essential to Victory

OUR Lord was saved from any vacillation . . . by reason of the fulness, the completeness of his consecration, which he had symbolized at Jordan. There he had said, in heart at least, "I delight to do thy will, O my God, thy law is written in my heart." This desire to please the Father, to obey the divine law in his heart saved our dear Redeemer from any yielding to Satan's wiles, and similarly our consecration as members of his body must be thorough if we would hope to stand the testing which must come to each one of us as we pass along the narrow way, following in his footsteps, seeking the glory, honor and immortality which he has promised us. Our Lord's prompt and all-sufficient answer was, Leave me, Adversary; for it is written, the Lord thy God shalt thou worship and him only shalt thou serve. I cannot be a co-worker with you in any sense of the word; to do so would be disloyalty to the great Jehovah. I must be loyal to the Lord and to the commission he has given me and to the doing of his will in his way **whatever the cost.**

Members of the body of Christ following in his footsteps have temptations from the Adversary along similar lines (to those with which Satan tempted our Lord.) Not that he (Satan) offers to divide the kingdom of earth with us, being incredible; but to us he does propose deviation from the close following in the Master's footsteps. **He suggests continually to the Lord's followers easier ways by which as much or more good can be accomplished and without sacrifice and self-denial.** These ways of avoiding sacrifice and yet of seemingly attaining good ends always imply more or less of co-partnership with the Adversary directly or indirectly, an acknowledgment of him, a bending to evil—to evil men or evil principles.

Under such circumstances we should note carefully the Lord's method and walk in his steps. We should refuse to have any partnership with sin or evil influences or methods in our endeavors to serve the Lord and his Truth. Satan does not approach us in human form nor in diabolic form, but generally through human agencies, through human ambitions, parties, sects, etc. If our Lord had made inquiry of Satan as to what would be the program, doubtless he would have advised him to become a Pharisee of the Pharisees at once, and through such steps gradually he would have proceeded to elevate our Lord over the Jewish people and ultimately over the world—if indeed he who was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the Truth could be trusted in respect to any promise. . . .

"Add to Your Faith Fortitude"

Another thought: one great difficulty with the Lord's people is that, even when determined for a right course and thus resisting the temptation, they do not take sufficiently positive action. Many say to the tempter, I have concluded not to yield at this time. Thus they leave in their own minds an opportunity open by which the tempter may return. Our Lord's course was the proper one: we should dismiss the tempter once and forever. We should take our stand so firmly that even the Adversary would not think it worth while to come back at us along that line: "Leave me, Adversary," I will worship and serve my God alone.

Our Lord's temptations thus terminated. Henceforth he had Satan for his Adversary, but the Father his protector and ultimately his deliverer. Had he not reached this final decision we may presume that Satan's temptations would have continued for days or weeks or years, and would have been a hindrance to the Lord in the work he had come to do. So with us, we must settle it if we would be on the Lord's side: we must decide that in no sense of the word will we yield to the Adversary, either from policy or to enter into any transaction either to protect life, name or fame. Our decision must be a firm one, somewhat as expressed by the poet:—

"Vain, delusive world, adieu,
With all thou callest good!
To my Lord I would be true,
Who bought me with his blood."

"Marvel Not If the World Hate You"

When the Lord's followers take a FIRM STAND on this subject as their Leader did, the results are the same. Satan is their implacable opponent: he will see to it that they do suffer, that there will be opposition not only by himself but by the world, which is largely under the influence of his spirit and in various ways. Taking this stand they must not marvel if the world hate them, and if all manner of evil be said against them falsely for Christ's sake. And the more prominent they may be, as in our Lord's case, the more virulent we may expect attacks against them to be—the more interested will the great Adversary be in overcoming them. This thought of Satan's opposition to us, and that we are contending not merely with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high positions of power, would be appalling to us did we not on the other hand realize that by this same positiveness of decision we acquire great helps and assistance by other unseen powers. From that moment of our positive resistance of temptation and positive standing up for the Lord and his cause, we become stronger in the Lord and in the power of his might, and greater is he that is for us than all that be against us.

It was so in our Lord's case. At once he was ministered to by the unseen messengers of Jehovah, and whatever terror lay in the intimated opposition of the Adversary was more than counterbalanced by the assurances of divine favor and assistance. So it is with us. If God be for us who can be against us—what will all the oppositions of the world, the flesh and the devil amount to since God declares that we are his and all things are ours, for we are Christ's and Christ is God's?—1 Cor. 3:21-23. Z. '04:10-11.

"To Whom Shall We Go?"

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."—John 6:68.

THERE are numerous voices in the world, calling mankind to follow in the pursuit of pleasure, of riches, of wisdom, etc., and various are the inducements presented, and to the young and inexperienced the bewilderment of so many attractions is great. But experience has taught many of us, that these seductive **Siren** voices would but lead us to shipwreck upon hidden rocks and shoals, and that "all that glitters is not gold." We have learned that the cravings of our own human natures are quite unreliable, that we are fallen beings, that our tastes and appetites are perverse, and so depraved that frequently we crave the things that tend to do us injury, and are inclined to reject the things which are best for us. Our Lord speaks of these various voices calling mankind and leading astray, and contrasts them with his own call of his own "sheep" who hear and obey it, saying, My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me: strangers will they not follow, because they recognize not the voices of strangers.—See John 10:3-5.

Not all are able to hear and recognize the Shepherd's voice in the present time: the majority are deaf on this subject, however acute their hearing may be as respects the inducements held out to them by the world, the flesh and the devil. Consequently the Scriptures say, "He that hath an ear to hear (the gospel) let him hear." But the opening of our ears to hear the good tidings, of which Christ is the center, does not close them to the various voices of selfishness, ambition, pride, avarice, and, vain-glory, and the other voices proceeding from the world, the flesh and the devil: it would seem indeed that, after accepting us to be his sheep, and after giving us some opportunity to learn the sound of the Shepherd's voice, the voice of Truth, we are intentionally exposed to the various voices which would call us away from our Shepherd, and from following in his footsteps. And Oh, **how many stray away!** "Walking after their own desires." How many thus become side-tracked on the way to the heavenly cry! How many are ultimately entirely switched off into another direction! How many have thus gone "back and walked no more with him!" How few, what a "little flock," they are that follow on, day by day, to know that Shepherd more fully, to walk in his paths, and ultimately with him to reach the heavenly Kingdom!

It will be remembered that the words of our text were called forth by a certain **sifting** of the discipleship. Our Lord's ministry had progressed considerably: at first, the people hung upon his words and said, "Never man spake like this man," and "great multitudes followed him." But towards the close of his ministry, as the jealousy and animosity of the "Doctors of Divinity" and the Pharisees began to manifest itself, he became less popular, and in our context we find that many of his hearers were leaving him, and he said, "Therefore, said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered and said unto him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Such siftings and testings of the Lord's disciples have been in progress throughout the Gospel age, **and still continue.** Many have **directly** or **indirectly, intentionally** or **unintentionally,** repudiated the great Shepherd, his leading and his instruction. Some, because the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees said, "He hath a devil and is mad. Why hear ye him?" Some, because they did not understand his teachings, and they said, "This is a hard saying: who can believe it?" Others, **because his teaching drew the line too sharply between righteousness and sin,** between God and Mammon; and we may understand as literal our Lord's statement that eventually only a "little flock" will be found worthy of the Kingdom.

It may sound harsh to some, because of their misconception of the subject, when we say that the Lord's message and leading were as much intended to shake off and repel one class, as to attract and to hold another class. . . .

As it is written concerning the end of the Gospel age, and the final glorification of the "little flock," "He shall gather out of his Kingdom (class) all things that offend and them that do iniquity. . . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." We may rest assured that none who are fit for the Kingdom will be sifted out. Of such it is written, "No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand; and again, "If ye do these things (hearken to the voice of the Lord and cultivate his spirit and walk in his ways), ye shall never fall (for so doing), and an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

How all-important then it is, that we have our minds **thoroughly made up** respecting the voice that we will obey and the footsteps that we will follow—for "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." We "cannot serve God and Mammon," however much we try. We cannot hear and obey the voice of Satan and Sin and the World and Self and the Flesh, and at the same time hear and obey the voice of the Good Shepherd, the voice of Truth, the voice of Love. Let this be settled and fixed in our minds, that it may keep us from all wavering after we have once taken our place amongst the Lord's sheep. . . .

In harmony with this thought are the words of the Lord to fleshly Israel, the typical people.—"The Lord your God **proveth you** to know whether ye love the Lord your God with **all** your heart and with **all** your soul." (Deut. 13:3.) This explains the object and intent of the Divine course with us, the true Israel, throughout the Gospel age; he has been proving his people, testing them, to ascertain the degree and the strength of their love for him. He tells us that "Not everyone that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom": that many who make the covenant of full consecration will fail to keep it, fail to obey its requirements, and that their failure will indicate a deficiency of love for him, and that self-will still reigns in their hearts, giving God only the secondary place. And the Kingdom is only intended for those who by God's grace shall at heart become like to the Lord Jesus, in that they will love the Lord with **all** their hearts, with **all** their souls, and be able to say, "Not my will, but thy will, O Lord, be done." No other condition than this condition of full submission to the Lord can make us acceptable for the Kingdom: for no other condition represents full self-submission and full love to God. And let us not forget that all the heavenly things which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," God hath reserved for them that love him **supremely.** . . .

If we could but keep in memory the fact that every trial, every persecution, every difficulty of life, permitted to come upon those who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to **prove them,** to test their love, to see whether or not their characters are fixed, rooted and grounded in righteousness and being built up in love, it would put all these trials, difficulties and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assist us in fighting a good fight and overcoming. We would say, If by these little trials the Lord is proving my love and devotion to him, then, however trifling they may be or however important, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fulness of my love and devotion to him and his cause. Thus viewed and thus met, every trial and every difficulty would prove to be a blessing: as the Apostle puts it, "Beloved, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;" "greatly rejoice, though now for a season ye are in manifold temptation, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." "Blessed is the man that endureth (faithfully under) temptation: for after his trials he will receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." "These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, **work out** for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"—if rightly utilized.—1 Pet. 1:7; Jas. 1:2, 12.

Thus we are again assured that those who love the Lord, and who in consequence will receive the Kingdom, will be those whose love will have been tested by trials and temptations on the way to it. Those who do not love the Lord with **all** their hearts, in whom self or some other idol has first place, will be seduced by the world, the flesh or the devil into some form of rebellion against the Divine Word or divine providence: they will have schemes and theories which they will prefer to the Lord's plan, and their own theories and plans when analyzed will usually be found to be based either upon selfishness or ambition or upon an evil spirit of envy, hatred, jealousy, etc.

The Lord's leading and the Lord's words lose their attraction to such, and they lose their interest correspondingly, and like those who turned away from the Lord at the first advent, saying, "This is a hard saying"—they walk no more with him. But some will continue to walk with the Lord; some will not be driven from him by any of the arts and wiles of the evil one. They are such as are at heart fully the Lord's, not their own; they will follow wherever the Lord may lead, because they have no will except his will. These will follow the Lord in the narrow way of trial, discipline and testings during the present life, and by and by, as he has declared, "They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." (Rev. 3:4.) Nor will this company lack in numbers by reason of the falling away of some. No, it will be full, complete, the predestinated number which God foreordained he would select to be joint heirs with his Son, our Lord Jesus. His foreknowledge permitted him to make full allowance for all who would turn back, as well as to foreknow that the requisite number would go on.

Those who go on will have the general character of Christ—faithfulness to the Lord and to his word of promise: and when various voices call in various directions, away from the narrow way of consecration and sacrifice, humiliation and self-denial, they, in answer to the Lord's query, "Will ye also go away?" will answer as did the apostles of old, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." "They know nowhere else to go; they cannot turn back, for they can see clearly that to turn back on their part would be as the Scriptures express it, to "turn back unto perdition," to the second death. Having heard the calls of the world, the flesh and the Devil, they have seen also the emptiness of all their false promises, and how none of them can give a satisfying portion. But in our Lord's call they have recognized not only righteousness, justice, but have recognized, also, the promised reward of righteousness through Christ, which he has promised to them that love him—namely, eternal life. . . .

As the faithful disciples realized a meaning in the Master's teachings at the first harvest which the majority could not realize, so now at the second advent his words have a preciousness and a meaning and a force to those who are in heart-harmony with him, which they do not have to others; hence now, as at the first advent, some are stumbling and going back, and others are being drawn to the Lord more closely than ever, by the "present truth" which he is supplying as "meat in due season." As we progress in the way, . . . we shall not be surprised if the way should grow still narrower, more difficult, and if the tendencies to "stumble" should become more frequent. Let us each, therefore, more and more be on our guard against the wiles of the Adversary; and let the perfect love of God rule in our hearts, driving out self-love and world-love, and their pride and ambition and folly: and let this devotion to God bring into our hearts the promised fulness of joy and rest and peace; and let us abide in him, the Vine, and be fruitful branches, responding to all the prunings of the great husbandman with more abundant fruitage; and if beguilements come to us, let us view the matter as did the apostle and say, "Lord, to whom should we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Z. '98: 38-42.

Belonging to Unions

Question (1916)-1—I belong to the railroad union, B. of R. T., and am also a consecrated child of God. In case of railroad strike what would you advise me to do?

Answer.—I do not think I could say anything on such a subject different from what I have already said in regard to the matter in the 6th Volume of Studies in the Scriptures. I think a good many of the friends have not read the six volumes for quite a while, and I think they had better read them over again. I remind you of how it is possible to read the entire six volumes through in one year by reading twelve pages a day. And I believe those following that plan are getting a blessing, and have answers to questions they would not have if not following that plan, or that they could have in any other way. Because all our minds are leaky. . . .

Now, in this question we have suggested in the sixth volume that the Lord's people are in our judgment at liberty to join such an arrangement as a business matter. If it is a carpenter's union, a bricklayer's union, locomotive engineer's union, if it is necessary for the maintenance of their job or occupation, to join, we see nothing in the Word of God to contradict that thought. "But would you prefer that?" No. I would prefer to stand fast in full liberty. "But would you sacrifice liberty in Christ? No. It would not have to be sacrificing liberty in Christ because I would still be at liberty, if they do anything criminal or illegal, I would say, "Brethren of the Bricklayers' Union, or Brethren of the Locomotive Engineers' Union, I am sorry to tell you I cannot agree with this course you are taking, and while trying to be loyal in every way, yet I am drawing the line because of this principle I think is involved. But I do not see why there might be very many things to find fault with. It seems to me if it were not for just such arrangements as these unions have made that wages and conditions of labor would not be so good as they are. And if God has been pleased to allow these men to make such arrangements as a power for their own uplift out of degradation, I say I am well pleased with what God has permitted. To whatever extent any of these unions may extend to anything illegal or do harm to some non-union man, to that extent you and I as followers of Jesus could not be in harmony with them, and if any union plotted to blow up buildings or destroy life or produce riots, you and I would be bound to say, "Brethren, we cannot stand with you. We stand for righteousness and truth. We must withdraw." And there is no need so far as I can see unless they do something of that kind. Merely for them to order all the locomotive engineers to go on strike would not mean they are going to do violence to the life of any man. Not at all. . . Ques. Book, 675-676.

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A truly good conscience is one which is well balanced. One may have a scale, for instance, that is perverted either one way or the other. A scale which is rightly adjusted will stand level. It is reliable. And so with a good conscience—it is one which can determine the slightest deviation from God's Law. Z. '15: 262.

Organization for Mutual Benefit

WE are living in a day of organization, and it must be admitted that some of these have been and are truly wise and beneficial arrangements. Insurance companies of every kind are, of course, on a commercial footing, not, strictly speaking, philanthropic. They are endeavors on the part of humanity to bridge over the uncertainties and difficulties of the present life—to make provision ahead for death and its calamitous results in the affairs of dependent ones. We need not go into descriptions or details respecting the various kinds of insurance, but may say at once that it is purely a matter of business judgment, and not a religious question, whether or not the Lord's people shall avail themselves of insurance opportunities.

We have known circumstances in which we consider that the father of a family did wisely in keeping an insurance policy for the benefit of his wife and children. Especially is this a wise course where the wife is not in sympathy with Present Truth and the husband's views respecting the near future, and when she desires insurance as a protection and as a rest and relief to her mind. If the husband's judgment in any considerable degree coincides with that of his wife, we think he would do well to maintain such insurance. We are not advocating insurance, and as for the writer, he carries none. We are merely pointing out that nothing in the Scriptures is designed to govern or regulate the conduct of New Creatures in this respect, and that each must use his own judgment in harmony with his own peculiar conditions in deciding the matter.

We admonish the New Creation to have nothing whatever to do with any of these semi-religious societies, clubs, orders, churches; but to "Come out from amongst them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." (2 Cor. 6:17.) Their things, their worship, their teachings, their doctrines, are unclean to us, though they may not be unclean to themselves. The eyes of our understanding have been opened, and now to us all things appear in a new light, so that things which we once loved now we hate, and things which we once hated now we love.

But as concerns other orders and societies, which contain nothing of a religious character, worship, teaching, doctrine, practice, but are merely mutual-benefit insurance societies, and which attach signs and passwords merely as a diversion; or as respects other societies of working men, trades unions for mutual benefit and protection against injustice and for the maintenance of reasonable wages;—we have nothing to say against these. They all claim to be organized along lines of justice, such as we could approve. They all claim to have no intention of violating the laws, human or divine. We see, therefore, no valid objection that could be raised against these, if for any reason the New Creature found it to be either necessary or expedient to become associated with them. Our own choice and our advice to others, so far as it will practicably apply to their cases, would be to stand free from all human organizations, united only to the Lord and to those who have his Spirit; but we well know the stress under which labor organizations came into being, and that if it were not for their existence in all probability the wages of the working men would be lower than they are, and their general conditions worse.

Yet, while we feel a general sympathy with the object of these associations, we cannot indorse all the methods sometimes pursued, for all must admit that they frequently use the power of organization in a tyrannical manner. We must sympathize with their general purpose, viz.: a resistance to the pressure sure to attend the accumulation of wealth, and the general tendencies under such circumstances, in the hands of the selfish, to crowd the poor to the point of resistance. Our advice to the brethren living in communities where labor organizations are in power, and upholding wages, would be that they voluntarily contribute to the expenses of the organization the same amount they would if they were members, and with the same regularity, and that in general they obey the commands of the order, unless they be contrary to their consciences; but that if possible they avoid membership, explaining their position to some extent at the time of proffering their share in the assessments. This would make manifest to all that the desire to be free from membership was not a selfish desire to shirk a responsibility for the expenses incidental to the preservation of the favorable conditions under which labor operates.

If, however, nothing short of regular membership will be accepted, we know of no command of the Scriptures or other reason why they should abstain from membership,—especially if membership be made a condition upon which their daily bread would depend. Let them join under such circumstances, and pay their dues regularly, but avoid attendance at meetings unless at such times as they have reason to believe they could give a word in season that might be helpful in the proper direction of the interests of the order, in harmony with peace and righteousness. In the event of a strike, let them obey the order to withdraw, yet take no part whatever in anything that would be riotous or contrary to, the rights and liberties of others; and let this be thoroughly known to the officers of the society, so that they would not think of requiring such service. Vol. 6: 578-582.

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When the last one of these Wise Virgins shall have gone in, we are told that the door will be shut, by which we understand that the door of privilege to enter that class will be closed to all the rest of mankind. But we are to remember that the entire ten virgins represent the Kingdom of Heaven, or, in other words, the Church. Hence a part of that Church is shut out when the door is closed. Not merely is the world shut out, but the Foolish Virgins also, who, however, are not to be counted with the world, because they are "Virgins." They are Virgins who have been associated with the Wise Virgins, and for a time without any distinction being apparent, but who in the testing time are not found worthy to be of the Bride class. Z. '10: 244.

"He Maketh the Storm a Calm" Psa. 107:29.

—Mark 4: 35-41.

OUR Lord's ministry is supposed to have covered two years at the time of the miracle of the calming of the sea. . . After the selection of the twelve apostles and the Sermon on the Mount, etc., our Lord returned to Capernaum and soon after began his second tour of Gallilee. It was during this interim that he awakened from the sleep of death the son of the widow of Nain—the first recorded instance of its kind in our Lord's ministry. Then came teachings by parables, and in the afternoon of a busy day of teaching—after three o'clock, while still sitting in one of the boats as on a former occasion, having concluded his teachings—he directed that the boat be taken to the opposite side of the lake. The multitude, after being informed that the discourses were ended, were dismissed, and without delay the boat was started. From the various accounts we judge that all the twelve disciples were with him, and apparently other "men" — seamen, as Matthew's account implies.

Travelers tell us that the Sea of Galilee is quite subject to windstorms. Dr. Thompson, describing his own experiences on this little sea, says: "The sun had scarcely set when the wind began to rush down toward the lake; and it continued all night long with constantly increasing violence, so that when we reached the shore the next morning the face of the lake was like a huge cauldron. The wind hurled down every wady from the north-east and east with such fury that no efforts of rowers could have brought a boat to shore at any point along that coast. To understand the causes of these sudden tempests, we must remember that the lake lies low, 600 feet lower than the ocean; that the vast and naked plateaus of the Jaulen rise to a great height, spreading backward to the wilds of Hauran, and upward to snowy Mt. Hermon; that the watercourses have cut out profound ravines and wide gorges, converging to the head of the lake, and that these act like gigantic funnels to draw down the cold winds from the mountains."

"We Are Not Ignorant of His Devices"

Our own opinion is that "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) had something to do in the development of this storm—that it had more than natural causes, although the latter might have assisted or even been sufficient. We remember that the Adversary had already endeavored to induce our Lord to leap from the pinnacle of the Temple, but had not succeeded. Apparently now he would drown him in the sea. But the Lord, who declares himself able to make the wrath of man to praise him, caused the wrath of Satan or the wildness of the elements, whichever it was that induced the storm, to praise him—to show forth his mighty power.

During the storm our Lord lay asleep in the hinder part of the vessel on a cushion. Evidently he was thoroughly exhausted from the labors of his journey and ministry. Meantime, as the storm increased, the boat with its precious load began to fill with water more rapidly than it could be bailed out. No wonder the disciples, fishermen and experts at sea though they were, were alarmed. We cannot avoid the thought that in some manner the Lord's providence had something to do with his prolonged sleep under such circumstances, and that the intention was to put the faith of the disciples to the test. They had seen his mighty works, his healing of the sick, and his awakening of the dead, and they had heard his teachings and had taken a miraculous catch of fish under his direction where they had failed before, and by this time they should have had considerable faith in his power every way. The fact that they approached him at all indicates that they did have faith to some degree, though not implicit faith.

The slightly different accounts of the event given by Matthew, Mark and Luke, someone has paraphrased as follows.—Matthew: "Save, Lord, we perish"; Mark: "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?" Luke: "Master, Master, we perish." All three accounts are correct—one disciple cried out in one way and others in different words. Someone puts it thus: "Little Faith prayed, 'Save us;' Much Fear cried, 'We perish'; Distrust urged, 'Carest thou not?' More Faith said, 'Lord'; Discipleship cried out, 'Teacher'; Faint Hope cried, 'Master thou with authority'." Jesus arose (awoke) and commanded peace and quiet, which immediately followed. The record mentions the cessation of the wind and additionally the calming of the sea. Some one might claim that a storm which came up suddenly might happen to stop with equal suddenness, but this would not account for the calming of the sea. Waters thus lashed to a fury could not be calmed thus quickly except by superhuman power. This, indeed, we may assume to be a prominent feature of the miracle.

It is rather peculiar that the Greek word used for "Be still!" in this text is the same word used by our Lord to the demon. (Mark 1:25.) This rather corroborates the suggestion foregoing respecting the storm being the work of the Adversary. In any event this miracle shows clearly that storms should not be accredited, as they frequently are, to divine malevolence; for if the Father had caused the storm the Son would not have interfered with it. We do not wish to intimate, either, that every storm is of Satanic origin; we do not dispute that many of them arise from natural causes; but we do hold that some of them are supernatural and of the Adversary, and as a Scriptural evidence along this line we cite the whirlwind raised up by Satan, which smote the house in which Job's children were feasting.—Job. 1:13, 19.

That our Lord intended this experience to be a lesson to the disciples, along the line of faith in him, seems to be borne out by verses 40, 41. He said unto them, "Why are ye fearful? Have ye not yet faith?" Has your faith not yet developed to such a degree that you can trust me, and realize the Father's favor and power ever with me for my protection, and that while with me no harm could possibly overtake you—nothing that is not wholly under my control? No wonder the apostles gained additional reverence for the Lord as a result of this miracle. Apparently it came just in the right time and order to be their appropriate lesson. In fact we may conclude that every item of their experience and every item of our Lord's conduct, teaching and mighty works was especially for the instruction of these twelve, who were to be his witnesses to us and to the nations of the earth respecting that ministry.

Spiritual Lessons for the Spiritual Household

There is a precious lesson in this miracle for all of the Lord's followers outside of the Apostleship, too. We also have need of faith and need of tests to our faith. Our daily experiences since we became the Lord's followers have been guided and guarded apparently by the power unseen, to the intent that as pupils in the school of Christ, we may be all taught of him and develop more and more of the graces of the Spirit, and particularly more and more faith. How important this item of faith is we probably cannot fully appreciate now. It seems to be one thing that the Lord especially seeks for in those now called to be followers. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "With faith all things are possible." Proper faith is understood, of course, not credulity, not reliance upon the words of men, but implicit faith in the Lord for all that he has promised. "According to thy faith be it unto thee."

So important a grace must of necessity require many lessons for its proper development, and it does not surprise us that in our individual experiences as Christians we find those which correspond to the experiences of the apostles noted in this lesson. How suddenly the Adversary may at times bring against us a whirlwind of temptation or of opposition or of persecution. How at such times our sky seems overcast, dark, foreboding; how the waves of adversity or affliction have almost overwhelmed us, and how the Lord seemed asleep and heedless of our distress and indifferent to our necessities! Such experiences are tests of our faith, as this one was a test to the faith of the apostles. If our faith be strong enough under such circumstances, we would keep on with our proper endeavors to adjust matters corresponding to the bailing of the boat and the working of the oars; but meantime, with an implicit faith in the Lord's promise that "all things shall work together for our good," we would be able to sing as did the Apostle Paul and Silas after being beaten while in the stocks for their faithfulness to the Lord. They rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. So according to our faith will we be able to rejoice even in tribulation. We cannot enjoy the sufferings; **we can enjoy the thought which faith attaches to them,** namely, that these are but light afflictions working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Each experience of this kind should be helpful to us. If at first we were fearful and cried aloud, by and by we received the succor with perhaps the reprimand, "Oh, thou of little faith"; but as lesson after lesson has come to us, the Master will expect —and we should expect of ourselves—greater faith, greater trust, greater peace, greater joy in the Lord, greater confidence in his presence with us and his care over us, and in his power to deliver us from the Adversary and from every evil thing, and to bring us eventually in safety to the port we seek—the heavenly Kingdom.

The Church's Experiences Prefigured

Someone has suggested, apparently on reasonable grounds, that this experience of Jesus and the Apostles in the boat during the night pictured the experiences of the Church this Gospel age. The Lord assured his people, saying, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the age," and "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also," and "nothing shall by any means hurt you," etc. The Lord's faithful people all through this age have realized with more or less distinctness the certainty of these precious promises; they have felt that the Lord indeed is with his Church; yet it has seemed at times as though he were asleep, inattentive to the prayers of his faithful, and inattentive to their cries and groans. For eighteen centuries his dear ones have been tempest-tossed by the Adversary, persecuted, afflicted, buffeted—all through this dark night, in which the only light available has been "thy Word a light to my feet." **The experiences of others in the past are our experiences in the present.**

We of today represent the Lord's cause in the midst of the raging elements of human passions, oppositions, etc.; and as the Apostle declares of his day, so it is still true that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high positions." The storms may seem to come from the world, but really beyond the world is the Adversary. **"We are not ignorant of his devices"**; our hearts would be at times dismayed except as faith is able to see the Lord with us in the ship, and able to grasp the thought of his mighty power in his own time and way to speak peace to the world.

Soon the time will come for him who careth for us to exert his great power on our behalf, to deliver his people, to say to the raging elements, Peace, be still. Then will follow the great calm, the great rest from the evil one for a thousand years, for he shall be bound that he shall deceive the nations no more. Then will come the eternal rest of the heart to all who are now in the boat with the Lord, and then will come the opportunity for all these to be co-laborers with him in the great and glorious work of blessing the world. It must not surprise us, however, if a dark hour is before us—if the time will come when the stormy winds will be so fierce that many will cry out in fear and trembling. Let us learn well the precious experiences of the present time, so that then our faith shall not fail us—so that in the darkest hour we shall be able to sing and to rejoice in him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood, and to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Z. '04: 58-60.

Truly, the great Adversary is being permitted to prepare "strong delusions" for those who, having been brought in contact with the truth, either resist it or, by failure to follow the true light LOYALLY, show that they are unworthy of it, "that all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."—2 Thes. 2:11, 12. Z. '96: 216.

Unto the Pure All Things are Pure

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unfaithful nothing is pure; but both their mind and conscience are defiled: they profess to have known God, but by their works they renounce Him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work worthless."—Tit. 1: 15, 16.

NOT sinners, not the worldly, are thus spoken of by the Apostle, but those who have enjoyed the truth, and who have enjoyed at least the first step in heart-purification, namely, justification; and whose hearts have become defiled through a failure to maintain in them the law of love as the ruling principle. Instead of being filled with love, selfishness, with its defilement, has been received back as the ruling principle of the heart. Such have the spirit of the world, and sometimes exercise it with a much greater degree of animosity than the world exhibits. They are specially ready, as the Apostle intimates, to impugn the conduct and motives of others: being selfish themselves, they attribute selfishness to everyone else: being impure themselves, they attribute impurity to others; having lost the spirit of love which thinketh no evil, their hearts rapidly fill up with selfish, envious, uncharitable, ungodly, unkind sentiments, toward those who are true, sincere and noble. . . .

The Apostle suggests of such that not only their minds become corrupted, but also their conscience; so that they will do evil, think evil, and yet their consciences do not reprove them; because their consciences and minds work in harmony, and, as the scriptures declare, they become blinded, self-deceived. What a terrible condition this is, and how careful all of the Lord's people should be, not only to have pure hearts, pure minds, but also to keep their consciences very tender, in close accord with the word of the Lord. This condition can only be maintained by judging ourselves, and that strictly and frequently, by the standard which God has given us, his law of Love.

"I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or fond desire;
To catch the wandering of my will,
And quench the kindling fire."

As the Apostle points out, those whose minds become impure, poisoned by ambition or pride or selfishness, the spirit of evil, profess to have known God they are apt to profess as loudly as ever, sometimes, indeed, becoming boastful of how much they know of God, and of his Word, and of how wise they are as respects its interpretation. Not by boasting or professions, therefore, can we always judge who are of the pure minds and of good consciences, and in full harmony with the Lord. Rather by their fruits we shall know them, as the Master said—by their works, as the Apostle here points out. If any profess to know God, and yet by their works renounce him, we are fully justified in questioning whether or not they may not be self-deceived, whether or not their consciences, as well as their minds, may not have become defiled.

To renounce the Lord in our works, does not necessarily mean to resort to murder, robbery, licentiousness, etc. It means rather , in the beginning at least, that from the hitherto good fountain of a cleansed or renewed heart or will, from which issued purity, truth, sweetness, kindness, encouragement and refreshment for all who drank of its waters, in the home and family and neighborhood and amongst the Lord's people, would issue instead bitter waters, producing bitter feelings, watering and nourishing roots of bitterness, stiring up malice, envy, hatred, strife, etc. No wonder the Apostle says of such that they are abominable! All who have the spirit of the Lord must abominate the spirit of evil, however surprised and grieved they may be to find it issuing from one who previously gave forth sweetness, love, kindness, good works.

As the Master declared, if the professedly sweet fountain sends forth bitter waters, we may know that there is something wrong, something defiling in the fountain, and are not to deceive ourselves respecting its waters, and to partake of its bitterness.

Commenting along the same line the Apostle James declares, "If any man among you seemeth to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain." Because the tongue is the index of the heart, because "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh," therefore the unbridled tongue speaking selfishly, enviously, bitterly, boastfully, slanderously, proves that the heart from whose fulness these overflow is unsanctified, unholy, grievously lacking of the spirit of Christ,—hence, whatever religion it may have attained is thus far vain, as that heart is not saved nor in a salvable condition. No wonder the Apostle comments in our text, that such are "disobedient;" only by disobedience to the law of Love, could anyone reach such a condition of heart and conscience defilement, after he had been purified through faith in the precious blood, and consecrated to the Lord.

The final statement of our text is that such an one, having lost the spirit of the truth, and having obtained instead a spirit of bitterness, rancor, evil, having a poisoned or defiled mind and conscience, is "to every good work worthless." No matter what work such an one might undertake to do, it would surely be spoiled, because the spirit of evil, the spirit of pride, the spirit of selfishness, the spirit of malice and envy, are so violently in opposition to every feature of righteousness and goodness and truth and love, that there can be no peace, no co-operation between them. And this reminds us of our Lord's words, to the effect that those who are his people and who have this spirit, are "the salt of the earth,"—preservative, so long as they have this spirit; but, as he suggests, if the salt lose its saltness—if the Christian lose their peculiar features of the spirit of Christ which constitute him different from the world, separate from the world, and a salting or preservative quality in the world—if he should lose these, what?—he would be worthless as bad salt, "to every good work worthless."—Titus 1:16. Z '99:214-215.

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The experiences through which the church is now passing are real tests of faith. Z. '18:102.

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The Apostle Peter, another faithful lieutenant in the army of our King, tells us that a tried, proven faith, a faith that has stood the test of fiery ordeal, and has come off victorious in the testings, is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Peter 1:7). Every time we pass through a conflict and still retain, not only the Truth, but also our confidence in God, our reliance on His promises, our integrity of heart and of purpose, and our zeal for righteousness, our characters grow stronger, more symmetrical, more Christlike; and hence we are more pleasing to our King, who is subjecting us to discipline to this very end. Z. '17:245.

How the grace of humility shines out in all the little affairs of our dear Redeemer's ministry! Even at the moment of His surrender to His enemies He did not boast that His course was a voluntary one, nor did He seek praise as a martyr. He declared the simple truth—that the Father required this of Him as an evidence of personal loyalty. He confessed Himself a Servant of God, a Son who had learned obedience through the things which He suffered—"The cup which My Father poured for Me, shall I not drink it?" Indeed, this was the strength of His victory—His will was fully submitted to the Father's will, and His faith grasped the fact that the Father permitted no unnecessary evils to come upon Him, but only such as He could and would overrule for good.

There is a valuable lesson here for all who are seeking to walk in the footsteps of the great High Priest—for all the Royal Priesthood. We are also to remember that as long as we abide in Christ and seek to walk in His steps, all of the trying experiences of life are carefully measured for us by the Lord; that He does not pour into our cup of sorrow and trial any bitter experiences which are not needful for us, and which will not work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Corinthians 4:17.) With these assurances and with the evidences of the Father's faithfulness to our glorified Master and Forerunner, we indeed may have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. —Hebrews 6:18-20. Z. '17:156.

"Wherefore," Christian brethren, "be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." We have before us the open book of the divine revelation, and never in the Church's history has God left his people without teachers—helps, index-fingers, to point his flock to the principles and precepts of his Word, and to help them to compare scripture with scripture. But side by side with the true teachers there have always been the false; and side by side with the truth they place the error; and it is your individual Christian common sense that must decide the matter for yourself —"Prove all things and hold fast that which is good." "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another." Z. '95:53.

Our Father's ear is ever open to the cry of His children. They are as dear to Him "as the apple of His eye." They "are graven upon the palms of His hands." "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you," is His promise to His own. All that we can render will be at best very, very little in return for all His bounties, for all His matchless grace toward us. But **the measure of love and zeal that accompanies our little all will indicate the measure of our gratitude to our Heavenly Father and our great Redeemer.**

"What shall I render, Lord to Thee?
Thy love surpasses all my thought!
What can a fitting tribute be
To Him who my poor life hath bought?

"Who sought me in my low estate,
And raised me up to heights Divine!
What words can fitly sound Thy praise,
Or thought encompass love like Thine?

"What shall I render, Lord, to Thee?
My heart, my strength, my life, I bring!
My hands, my voice, in service glad,
To Thee, my Savior and my King!"
Z. '14:281.

Let us remember that the victory in the battle is not with the strong alone, but with those who have full faith and confidence in the Lord. "My help cometh from the Lord." In ourselves there is no strength, but He who is our captain is strong. Let us be strong in faith, giving glory to Him. Let us be calm, sober-minded, watchful and prayerful, using the Sword of Spirit to His glory, and He will bring us off more than conquerors—yea, overcomers! Z. '18:7.

Our **justification** comes to us as a reward of **faith,** regardless of works, but our **glorification** will follow only as a reward for **faithfulness**—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10. Z. '12:273.

It will be observed that the Apostle enumerates six parts of the armor; whereas the panoply of a Roman soldier consisted of seven parts. That part not named is the greaves, which fitted over the front part of the leg. This very beautifully symbolizes the Vow which the Feet Members are permitted to have; and as their face is always toward the enemy, they should be protected with this part of the armor. Z. '17:357.

Heaven is to be our eternal Home, not the earth, not the fleshly condition. All the precious promises center Above. Christ our beloved King is there. We are being prepared to enter soon into Heaven itself, the condition beyond the veil. The glories of the Holiest of all are now ours by faith; and they will soon be ours in reality if we hold fast and continue faithful to our covenant with God. Z. '16:164.

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Old Corn Gems

NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

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CONSCIENCE INDICATIVE OF HEART CONDITION

THE **only questiont remaining is, Will we be found faithful?** The Scriptures declare that He is faithful who has promised, and that He will do exceeding abundantly more than we could ask or think. He has determined that all who will receive the great blessing will be those who will demonstrate their loyalty to the fullest degree. Hence the Apostle urges, "Cast not away your confidence, which hath **great recompense of reward.**"

God will one day reward our confidence. Why is it that the Lord will especially reward our confidence? The reason is this: Our confidence in God represents our heart condition, and it will go down like a barometer in falling weather if we lose our faith. Our hearts cannot be wholly stayed on God except as we are strong in faith. The only instances in which Satan will be permitted to take away the confidence of God's people will be in the cases of some who have not been living up to their light. The Lord will **permit** such to go gradually into darkness.

So we are to keep firm hold of our confidence; for this assures us that God is our Father. We all know something of the wireless telegraphy which is now being used in a marvelous manner on the sea and on the land. And this is only a feeble illustration of the wireless communication that maintains between the true Christian and the Heavenly Lord. In every circumstance this confidence, leaning on the Lord, will look to Him. There will be the wireless communication between Father and child.

When the Lord's people find themselves in difficulty, they should reason like this: What is the Lord's will? What does His providence indicate? He has said that **all things** shall work together for good to me because I love Him; therefore, having confidence in God, I am sure that all things shall indeed work out for my good. I have faith in His Wisdom and His Power and His Love. He could have protected me from this difficulty had He seen best. So the fact of its reaching me proves that He saw fit to permit it for a wise reason. He has promised that He will not suffer me to be tempted, tried, beyond what I am able to bear. As He is faithful, He will never fail to keep that good promise. So then, I will "not cast away my confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

If God would reward according to **works,** some of His children would get very little. The very ablest of God's people cannot do very much.

God is testing your faith, your confidence, and our own. And, oh, that is worth so much more than all the wealth of the world! We have been invited to try for the great Prize. We said, Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord! Then He said, Will you be faithful under the conditions which I impose? I am watching to see how faithful you are every hour, every minute. I will protect you from the pitfalls in the way, as you strive to show forth My praises; I will uphold you in every trial. My dear children, I want to give to you a great blessing. You have all entered on a common basis. You would be very unequal in the race if I should take you according to your natural qualifications. I will judge according to your heart and how you do in little things. He that is faithful in the little things, in that which is least, will be faithful in that which is greatest. I will **reckon** the matter thus. That is a fair proposition, and exactly what the Lord says. God purposes to reward greatly all faithfulness. Z. '14:376-377.

"THE MASTER'S TOUCH"

"In the still air the music lies unheard;
In the rough marble beauty hides unseen:
To make the music and the beauty, needs
The master's touch, the sculptor's chisel keen.

"Great Master, touch us with Thy skillful hand:
Let not the music that is in us die!
Great Sculptor, hew and polish us; nor let,
Hidden and lost, Thy form within us lie!

"Spare not the stroke! do with us as Thou wilt!
Let there be naught unfinished, broken, marred,
Complete Thy purpose, that we may become
Thy perfect image, Thou our God and Lord!"
—Z. '05:285.

◆

In the faithful fulfilling of a covenant of entire consecration to God there is much to endure in the way of reproach and persecution from the world (2 Tim. 3:12), but to such the Lord through the Prophet (verse 15) says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou (by thy testimony and faithfulness) shalt glorify me." Z. '92:295.

The Elijah class are to understand God through the still, small voice heard by the ears of their hearts—the voice of Truth, the voice of God's Word speaking to his people today most wonderfully, yet unheard by the antitypical Ahab, Jezebel and others, intended **only** for the antitypical Elijah class. Z. '11:13.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle, Wash., December 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 1919, and January 1st, 1920. Five days of glorious fellowship. For information regarding accommodation write Brother F. French, 4227 Aurora Avenue, Seattle. Telephone, North 2079. Other communications please address to Brother H. J. Brown, 1424 South 12th Street, Tacoma, Wash., Treasurer of Convention.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18: 51.

TREASURES LAID UP IN HEAVEN

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."—Matthew 6: 19-21.

PLEASURE, delight, joy, comfort—all these sentiments are suggested to us by the word **treasure.** Our thoughts, our hopes, our plans, center there. Our treasure is the inspiration of our lives, the incentive to energy, perseverance and endurance, for the hope which it enkindles. Most people have treasures, but they are generally such as yield slight satisfaction, because they are transitory and disappointing. How many have built their hopes upon earthly things only to find them but illusive baubles, mocking delusions, leaving the heart at last broken, crushed and barren! The treasures of wealth, fame, social distinction, of houses and lands, of friends and home and family, of power and influence, are subject to change and decay! And if the heart be centered in them, they are liable in a moment to be swept away, leaving the life desolate and despairing, all the more so because of the high hopes which they had inspired.

The wealth, laboriously gathered and husbanded with great care, may vanish in a night. The fame so dearly won may change to censure and reproach at the caprice of fickle public sentiment. The social prestige which bade you to the uppermost seats may a little later relegate you to the lowest seat, and your name may be cast out as evil and you be ostracized. Houses and lands and carefully hoarded belongings may disappear under the sheriff's hammer. Friends long trusted may suddenly grow cold and turn their backs upon you, and even become your enemies. The home you love must sometime break up, the family be scattered or invaded by death. The love that glows upon the home altar may flicker and become dim or extinct. How many have found the high hopes of youth and early life turn to ashes in a few short years or months!

Truly, in this our day, as never before perhaps, would all who have the spirit of a sound mind to any degree be longing for a treasure which will be secure, a rock upon which they may plant their feet, one which will securely hold in these days of stress and uncertainty, when men feel that everything is slipping from beneath their feet, when nothing earthly is sure, when fear with distress is on every hand. At such a time as this, how blessed are we who are safe-sheltered in the cleft of the Rock of Ages, which cannot be shaken by the mightiest earthquake shock! How unspeakably precious is the treasure which we have laid up in Heaven; for we know our treasure is safe, where no storms nor billows can touch it.

The Treasures We Lay Up in Heaven

The all-important question for those who seek this great treasure then is, how can we lay up treasure in Heaven, and what kind of treasures are those which are to be stored up in the Heavenly depository? We have the assurance of the Divine Word that everything that is pure, holy and good is acceptable there. The very chiefest of all treasures is the personal love and friendship of God and of Christ. Jesus becomes to us "the fairest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely." He is an unfailing Refuge in every time of need, our daily Joy, and Solace and Comfort.

When we have gained this Treasure, we have gained the One that never changes, One whose love never grows cold, One from whom nothing can separate us—"neither death," which to His loved ones will now mean our blessed "change"; "nor life," which means further opportunities for suffering with Him that we may also share His glory, and which permits further works of loving service for Him whom we love; "nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers," for these cannot harm us who are sheltered in Christ; "nor things present, nor things to come"; for "all things works together for our good," and in every trial He will direct the issue that we may be able to bear it; "nor height" of temporary exaltation; "nor depth" of trouble or sorrow, for our Refuge and Strength is ever near; "nor any other thing" in creation, for He has promised to "keep the feet of His saints," and that nothing shall touch them as New Creatures in Christ, and that His presence shall go with them wherever they may be.—Romans 8:35-39; I. Sam. 2:9; Luke 10:19; Exod. 33:14.

Nor will any other creatures either in Heaven or in earth receive such marks of special favor as are and ever will be the portion of the beloved Bride of Christ. Although the whole family in Heaven and in earth will be blessed through Him, His Wife, co-operating with Him in His work, will alone be His companion, His confidante, His treasure. Hear the Lord's exhortation to the Bride class: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear. Forget also thine own people and thy father's house (the ambitions, hopes and aims of the children of Adam); so shall the King (Jehovah's Anointed) greatly desire thy beauty (beauty of character, of heart loyalty); for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." (Psalm 45:10, 11; Canticles 4). How unworthy we feel of so great honor and love from our beloved Bridegroom! And no wonder! When we look at all our imperfections, it seems that there is little in us to call forth such love and admiration. To think that the angels with all their purity and faithfulness should have been passed by; and that we poor, blemished mortals, should be chosen instead!

Is there not some mistake? Ah, no! We have the infallible words of inspiration to assure us that it is even so. This Bride of Jehovah's Son is to reign with Him in the future over a fallen race; and who could so well sympathize with them in all their weaknesses and frailties as those who have themselves partaken of the same? And who could bear the infinite heights of glory to which the Lamb's Wife will be raised, with such humility as those who realize that it was not through any worthiness of their own that they were chosen to so high an exaltation, but that it was all of Divine grace? Clad in the glorious Robe of our Bridegroom's furnishing, we can stand all complete, even now, in the eyes of Jehovah. And possessing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, the faith that trusts under every condition, the love that delights to do the Father's will, we are lovely in the eyes of our Beloved, our Bridegroom and our King.

Having this confidence, we can with unspeakable joy and gratitude lay hold of the exceeding great and precious promises which are ours through Christ, and without presumption press along the line toward the prize of our High Calling, humbly trusting that He who has begun the good work in us will complete it unto the day of our glorification with our Bridgegroom in the Heavenly Kingdom, when we shall be presented before the Father "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," gloriously complete and perfect, in the most absolute sense, fitted and prepared for the wonderful work which we shall share with our blessed Lord and King.

Incentives to Faithfulness

Listen to some of the blessed and inspiring promises with which the Father and the Son cheer the Bride: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." Ye "shall be Mine, in that day when I make up My jewels." "I will give thee to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give thee a white stone (a precious token of love), and in the stone a new name written (the name of our Bridegroom, henceforth to be our name) which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it," "Lo, I am with you alway." "And if I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also (and He has come, He is even now present, and will soon receive us unto Himself forevermore)." "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in my Throne." —Isaiah 33:17; Malachi 3:17; Rev. 2:17; Matt. 28:20. Jno. 14:3; 15:16. Rev. 2:10; 3:21.

Precious promises are these, wonderful words of life! Let us count them over and over again, that all their sweet significance may sink deep into our hearts and bring forth their blessed fruitage in our lives. May they cheer us in every dark and trying hour and reinforce our waning powers with renewed vigor, courage and zeal, that we may press along the narrow way until indeed our "eyes shall see the King in His beauty." What wondrous treasures do we thus find laid up in Heaven for us, because we have left the world and all its delusive fancies and aspirations and have laid hold upon the things eternal! And while this glorious inheritance is to be the possession of all the faithful, the Apostle intimates clearly that our Heavenly treasure may be augmented by special zeal and faithfulness under the peculiar trials of the present time.

One of the treasures which we may lay up in Heaven will be the marks of just approval and distinction among the good and holy beyond the veil, which patient endurance of affliction, unwavering trust under crucial trials and testings, diligence in the King's business, will secure to us. Treasures of mind and character, too, we shall find laid up in Heaven; for nothing that is good and true and worthy of preservation shall be lost to those who have committed their investments to the Lord. These are incorruptible treasures, which neither the lapse of time nor the exigencies of circumstances will ever wrest from us.

Other treasures will be all the true and noble friendships which have been founded in truth and righteousness here on earth, whether they be on the spiritual or on the natural plane. For instance, one on the spiritual plane will not be disposed to forget or ignore the loving loyalty of a former friend, who from time to time administered the cup of cold water to the thirsty soul battling with the heat and dust of life's desert way, and who did this because the one ministered to was a disciple of Christ.

But especially sweet will be the spiritual friendships begun and cherished here, which will bloom and blossom in still greater vigor when transplanted into Heavenly soil and atmosphere. And what a treasure we shall find in the gratitude and love of those to whom we have ministered here in times of special need, and to whom we have carried the Living Water and broken the Bread of Life! Who can measure the joy unspeakable that shall be the heritage of the faithful when we shall find all these precious treasures beyond the veil! When we view these treasures with unclouded eyes, and realize that they are ours forever, shall we not feel infinitely repaid for any sufferings and hardships we have borne in our brief earthly pilgrimage?

Heavenly Pilgrims Nearing Home

Then, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, let us keep our eyes steadfastly set upon the Heavenly, eternal things. Let us more and more lay up treasures where "moth and rust cannot corrupt and where thieves cannot break through and steal." (Matthew 6:20.) If our hearts are upon the Heavenly treasures, then the disappointments and afflictions of the present life cannot overwhelm us. Whatsoever things are worthy the aspiration of the spiritual sons of God are our real treasures, and they are the only things that are worth while. What care we for the illusive bubbles of this poor life, so soon to burst and disappear? Then, as sings the poet:

> "Let us touch lightly the things of this earth,
> Esteeming them only of trifling worth,"

not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, if we faint not by the way, but with our pilgrim's staff in hand shall press along the Heavenly road until we reach the goal of our hopes.

As the sun sinks at the close of each day, and the shadows gather around us, how sweet to sing, "I'm one day nearer Home!" We have nearly reached the mountain-top, and every day multiplies the evidences that the journey is nearing its end. Just how long it will be we cannot know; probably it is best that we do not know. **But we believe that it will not be very long.** Z. '16: 69, 70.

Guided by God's Eye

"I will guide thee with Mine eye."—Psa. 32: 8.

THE eye is one of the most important organs of the body with which to give expression to the feelings. Either anger or pleasure are usually expressed by this means. One thought which we may take from the text is that one may be so desirous of doing the Divine will that he will be **continually on the alert to please,** just as a dutiful child, being on the alert to do the will of the parent, would look at the parent's eye, not waiting for the rod. So all of God's dear children of the Church should be looking unto Jesus for the expression of the Father's will concerning them. They look to Jesus as the Author of their faith and the one who shall be the Finisher of it. They look to Him as the great Counselor and Guide of life. As we sometimes sing:

> "O, let no earthborn cloud arise
> To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!"

Another thought is that as the eye is the symbol of wisdom, so God guides all things in wisdom. **He sees to it that His children receive the necessary counsel, the necessary aid.** Since He is the All-Wise One, nothing can escape His attention. Still another thought is that as we recognize the Divine purpose, the Divine will, the Divine outworking of that will, we see that in the present time God is not trying to save the world, but only "the called," "the elect," who are obedient in sacrifice. All who are of the First-Borns should seek to follow the same course as God, to be co-workers with Him. They should have no will of their own, but do the Father's will.

One of the most important lessons for the spiritual Israelite to learn is to look to the Lord for leading in all of life's affairs—never to attempt any undertaking, either temporal or spiritual, without seeking to note the will of the Lord concerning it. We are marching toward the antitypical Canaan and know that other experiences are due us and must be undergone ere we can inherit the promises. The lesson for us is prompt and thorough obedience to the Lord's leadings without murmurings—with joyfulness; and this can be expected only on the part of those who have learned the lessons previously given them, and above all, the lesson of faith—confidence in the Lord's power and goodness and faithfulness. Z. '11: 223.

Things are either right or wrong; and the right side is always God's side. The reason that the path of the "little flock" is declared to be a narrow or difficult one at present, is, that it is God's path—the right path; and the world being wrong,—out of harmony with God, and consequently out of harmony with righteousness—is in opposition, directly and indirectly, to all who are in harmony with God and righteousness. And the more progress we make into harmony with God and righteousness the more the worldly-minded will hate us, and the more narrow and difficult the path of life will be. Hence the Apostle's words: "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." (Jas. 4: 4.) Can anyone suppose that God offers prizes of any grade or degree to those at enmity against him even to the extent of sympathy and harmony with his enemies and opponents? Surely not. Z. '94: 212.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle. The W. O. W. Hall has been secured for December 27th (the day before the Convention opens) as headquarters for incoming friends. The W. O. W. Hall is situated at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Marion Street. Telephone Main 5140. There will be an information bureau at the hall for the benefit of visiting friends.

"Not the Spirit of Timidity"

"For God hath not given us a spirit of timidity; but of courage, of love and of a sound mind."—2 Tim. 1: 7.

THERE is one kind of fearlessness which is begotten of self-esteem, lack of humility. This is not the kind enjoined upon the Lord's people. They are to be both tender-heated and humble-minded. The spirit of courage possessed by the saints is based largely upon their faith in the Lord. Realizing the divine love and providential care, these can apply to themselves the gracious assurance that "The Father himself loveth you" and that "All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose." It is this realization of divine all-wisdom and all-power that gives the strength of heart referred to in our text. It will be readily seen, then, that this courage is based upon faith, though of course the faith must have a foundation of knowledge. The proper relationship of our growth is primarily knowledge; faith, courage, activity, and all of these continue to grow, and in their maturity make us wise, faithful, courageous overcomers in respect to the spiritual matters to which we have been called. . . .

Love Casts Out Fear

There is a proper fear or reverence and disinclination to offend our heavenly Father and our Redeemer, which we wish never to lose. Perfect love will not cast out this fear, but rather intensify it. The fear which love casts out is timidity, a servile fear or dread of the Lord or of Satan, or the fallen angels, or of men and what they might do unto us. Perfect love cannot be attained without knowledge, faith, courage and overcoming. It is the result of the exercise of all this divine arrangement that brings us nearer to God and makes us truly thankful and appreciative of his gracious purposes and omnipotent power for their accomplishment.

The spirit of courage needs special cultivation by the Lord's people. And this cultivation means growth in all the graces. For instance, if calamity befall us or threaten us we should immediately think of the fact that our Lord assures us that an insignificant sparrow cannot fall to the ground without the Father's notice and that we are of much more value than many sparrows. This thought at once strengthens the heart, nerves the arm, quickens the pulse of endeavor, provided we can realize that God is for us, that no earthborn cloud intervenes between our souls and the love for us which he has declared. If a cloud does obscure the Father's love we must the more earnestly, the more persistently get from behind it by getting our hearts right with the Lord, by going to Him in prayer, by confessing our trespasses and by requesting mercy and grace to help and to restore us to his favor.

"Be of good courage an He shall strengthen thine heart," is one of the blessings assured us in His Word. In the divine order courage is necessary in order to strength and victory. Someone has said, "One with God is the majority." With the courage to grasp this thought and to hold it things almost superhuman seem possible to the Lord's people, while without this courage they may naturally be weak and easily vanquished.

Gem 4. Ke.,
on Courage.

Courage in the Evil Day

Never before, perhaps, was courage so needed as it will be needed in the evil day just before us: but the Prophets' descriptions of the great trouble time before us are very figurative when they speak of fire and clouds and pillars of smoke, saying of this time, "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke," etc. But the consecrated children of God need have no timidity in respect to these matters if they have the proper courage, developed by proper exercise and built upon proper faith, founded upon the knowledge of divine revelation. His attitude of heart will be, "I will fear no evil, for thou are with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Whether, therefore, storms financial, political, religious or demoniacal, come his way, the child of God may rest secure and be of good courage. The Lord is both able and willing to care for his interests and bring him off victor. Should the fallen angels be permitted to again materialize and personate either the dead or the living, this class need have no fear. Their perfect love for the Lord, based upon a knowledge and appreciation of his Truth, will lead them to triumph courageously over all the wiles of the Adversary and his hordes.

The Elect to Be Undeceivable

The Scriptures abound with testimonies to the effect that the severe trials of the near future will be along the lines of deception. They speak of lying angels and deceivableness of unrighteousness and "lying wonders" and tell us that the Lord will send or permit a strong delusion that they may believe a lie. If we gain the right conception of the matter these deceptions are to effect the whole world, including its wise men, and indeed practically everybody except the "very elect"; and the "very elect" will be preserved, not through their own wisdom or superiority, but through the power of God. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."—Matt. 24 : 24.

"Gather My Saints Unto Me"

Figuratively all of these "very elect" ones are gathered, and the place is thus described, "I will say to the Lord, he is my refuge; in him will I trust"; and again, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psa. 91: 1). Ah! no wonder that we also read, "No harm shall come nigh them." How could harm come to any who are thus close to the Lord? A thousand shall fall at thy side; ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee; because thou hast made the Lord thy refuge; thou hast made the Most High thy habitation."—Psa. 91: 7.

This nearness to God, into which his "very elect" will be gathered, will be the source of their protection. And the dangers to others will be in proportion to their distance to this great citadel of strength, this fortress, this refuge or tower.

"Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We're travelling through Emanuel's ground,
To fairer prospects nigh."

"All Power Is Given Unto Me"

These were our Lord's words after his resurrection. They were true then. They have been true throughout this age and they are still more completely true today, because we are now living in the time of which it is written, "He shall take unto himself his great power and reign." His reign has in some senses of the word already begun. He has already marshalled forces which will complete the overthrow, of everything opposed to his Kingdom and its righteous laws. And we may be sure that the members of his Body still in the flesh this side of the veil are no less subjects of his providential care than is the world and its affairs. We may be sure that nothing is transpiring, either in the nominal Church or amongst the kingdoms of the world; amongst socialistic or political parties or in the financial world contrary to what will best serve our Lord's purposes in connection with the events just before us and the outworking of the same in fullest accord with the prophecies.

Oh, that we could get this thought rightly settled in our minds! Yea, as the Scriptures say, "Settle it in your hearts"—that our Lord is at the helm superintending all of earth's affairs at the present time in a much more practical sense than ever in the past. And have we not seen his graciousness towards the Church in the . . . past? And can we doubt his continued supervision of the affairs of his betrothed to the grand consummation? "He who hath begun the good work in us is able to complete it," and he who has thus far conducted the work is able still to direct it, order, bless it and use it to his own praise and to the blessing of his people.

"Who led thee first will lead thee still;
Be calm and sink into his will."

Let us not be timid as respects . . . . our own personal relationship . . . to the Lord. Let us learn more and more to be on the lookout for the leadings of his providence and utilizing knowledge which he has given us from his Word. Let us not be surprised concerning the fiery trials which may try us and the stormy billows which may at times seem about to overwhelm us, "For greater is he that is on our part than all that are against us,"—however numerous, however strong, and whether demons or men. Let us remember that we are called to be overcomers and that the victory that overcometh the world is our faith.

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you" is the Lord's testimony. This implies an assault by the Adversary. It implies that he should be resisted and can be resisted and that in the end he will flee from us, not because of arrogance or power on our part, but, as our Master said, "He hath nothing in me"; so if he finds it useless to continue his assaults he will probably flee also from us to other fields of service. . . .

In conclusion, then, dear friends, be of good courage, of strong faith, of heroic determination, and see that your faith is not in yourself, nor in your vows, nor in your very best endeavors, but in the Lord. Trust in the Lord and the practise of your faith to control your thoughts and words and deeds and to bring you closer to our Father and Redeemer. We live in a time when worldly wisdom is taking hold of this need of courage and is advising people that it should be based upon self-confidence, self-assurance, self-esteem. This is the world's counterfeit, the Adversary's counterfeit of the true courage which the Word of God inculcates and through which we may not only rejoice in all of the present experiences of life, but ultimately "come off conquerors; yea, more than conquerors through him that loved us." Z. '09: 122-124.

Sin Not With Your Tongue

"I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me."—Psa. 39: 1.

OUR general **thoughts** have much to do with our **language**, our general conversation. Whoever, therefore, possesses a proper control of his **heart**, will govern himself in every sense of the word. If our ways please the Lord, if our ways are ways of righteousness, then out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak to the edification of the hearer. The ways being right, the utterances will be right. People generally love themselves and avoid saying anything bitter, unkind, about themselves. But the man who hates his neighbors will have very little difficulty in saying something bitter or unkind of them.

Though the tongue is one of the most useful members, yet it is necessary to put a bridle, a restraint, a controlling influence upon it. With the tongue we may honor our God or we may blaspheme Him. When in the presence of the wicked, we need to be still more on guard than with the righteous; for with the former the tendencies and thoughts are towards evil. When with the wicked or in their presence we are in contact with a degrading influence. At such times, some of sympathetic disposition may find special difficulty in bridling their tongues; but it is better to do so than to speak of even good things to the wicked, as we would feel at liberty to do with the righteous. The Lord has suggested, "Cast not your pearls before swine . . . lest they turn again and rend you."

Besides the evilly inclined of the world there is another class Scripturally called the wicked; namely, people who have a knowledge of the Lord, but who take their stand in opposition to Him. Judas was of this class. So there are about us those who are in an adverse attitude. None seem to be so cynical as those who have been partakers of the Holy Spirit, but who have turned their backs upon "the Way, the Truth and the Life." **Such**

seem to be more wicked than others in that they are in a more reprehensible attitude. No matter how careful we are, these will distort our words and assert that we have said something that we have not said.

The warning of the Scriptures is not against the tongue itself, but against the **power we exercise against others** by the use of our tongues. Probably every person of experience will fully agree with the statement that the tongue is potent in its influence beyond any other member of the body, for either good or evil.

The Tongue Often a Power for Evil Among the Lord's People

As the bit in the horse's mouth will control his strength: and as the small rudder of a vessel will direct its course; so the tongue, and the pen, its representative, may influence large numbers of people for good or ill. How important, therefore, is the tongue! And how much more frequently do we find it employed as an agency for evil than for good: to pull down rather than to build up the faith: to implant seeds of discord and discontent rather than those which will produce righteousness and peace! While this is specially true in the worldly, it is also true among God's people; and each should remember that to some extent he is a teacher, and day by day is either forwarding or hindering the cause of truth, righteousness and peace.

In the unregenerate world the tongue is a "fire" causing no end of burning of wrath, envy, hatred, strife and everything that defiles the entire body, stimulating all the fallen passions and desires. No wonder the Apostle declares that, figuratively, the tongue is set on fire of **gehenna**—the second Death. Its burning tends to bring, not only its owner, but others to destruction.

As imperfect beings we may not always be perfect in word and deed. Despite our best endeavours we sometimes err in word as well as in deed: **yet the perfect mastery of our words and our ways is to be sought by vigilant and faithful effort.** But, nevertheless, for **every idle word** we must give an account in this **our** day of **Judgment**.

We Should Daily Render Our Accounts

If, in the daily scrutiny of our ways, which is the duty of every Christian, we discover that our words have in any way been dishonoring to the Lord, we should remember that, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous" (I. John 2:1): and in the name of our Advocate we may approach the throne of grace. There we may explain to our Heavenly Father our realization of our error, our deep regret at our failure to honor His name and His cause by a holy walk and conversation, and humbly request that the sin be not laid to our charge; but that it may be blotted out by his gracious provision for our cleansing, through Christ, humbly acknowledging that in his precious blood is all our hope and trust.

Thus we should render up our account for every idle word; and by our words of repentance, supplemented by the merit of Christ applied by faith, shall we be acquitted. Otherwise the idle words dishonoring to the Lord, will stand against us and condemn us, and we shall be obliged to suffer the consequences. The first consequence will be **self-injury**, for every evil thought or word indulged hardens the character and inclines it the more toward unrighteousness. The second consequence is that by setting a bad example to others we stir up evil in them. "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." (Prov. 15:1). Thus, as the result of unwise or unkind words, we may stir up about us difficulties which will become agents of retributive Justice to teach us the lesson of self-control and consideration for the feelings and opinions of others.

It is often the case that the Lord (or the Devil) is blamed for sending trials, which are simply the natural results of our own mistakes. Those who fail to locate the root of the matter **(in themselves)** pray in vain for the Lord to remove miraculously what they themselves could obviate by obedience to the Word and vigorous self-discipline. "If we would judge (and correct) ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord (largely by the experiences through which our own faults put us), that we should not be condemned with the world." I. Cor. 11:31, 32.

The Tendency of Fallen Nature Is to Blame Others Rather Than Ourselves

But even should it be admitted that the difficulties are not directly caused by God or by the Devil ("Every man is tempted (tried) when he is drawn away by his own lusts (desires) and enticed"), the natural tendency is to blame some one else, and to think that our lack of patience, our hasty word or act, was the fault of another. How many deceive and encourage themselves with the thought, "If everybody else had as reasonable and generous a nature as I have, our family or Church gathering or community would be a veritable heaven upon earth!" Beloved let us examine ourselves, let us be very humble lest the thoughts of self-congratulation and self-satisfaction which we may consider in our hearts, **even if we do not utter them aloud,** bring our condemnation. "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye (what merit is there in it)? (Luke 6:32, 33.) It is only when we "endure grief, **suffering wrongfully,**" that our suffering is acceptable to God as a sacrifice of sweet incense. "What glory is it if, **when ye be buffeted for your faults,** ye take it patiently? But **if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently,** this is acceptable to God; for even **hereunto were ye called.**" (I. Pet. 2: 19-21.) Beloved, let us see to it that our **sufferings** are for **righteousness' sake only,** and let us not charge God or our neighbors for tribulations resulting from the indulgence of our own inherited or cultivated faults.

In view of the fact that we **now** stand before the bar of Judgment, which, if we are truly the Lord's people, we will endeavor more and more fully to realize, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (II. Pet. 3:11.) Godlikeness certainly cannot include any harmful gossip, any unclean or unholy conversation, any disloyal or rebellious words. Let us remember daily to settle our accounts with the Lord, to make sure that no record of idle words not repented of, and, consequently, unforgiven, stands against us. "Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ."

Holy Thoughts Produce Holy Words

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsover things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, **think on these things.**" Phil. 1:27; 4:8.) Thus out the good treasure of the heart we shall speak the words of truth and soberness, and honor our Lord by a godly walk and conversation, subduing the tendencies of our fallen nature, and "having our conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."—I. Pet. 2:12.

If daily we render up our accounts to God and seek his grace for greater **overcoming power** with each succeeding day, we shall be acquitted in judgment and *stand* approved before God, through Christ, having the *testimony* of his Holy Spirit with our spirits that we are pleasing and acceptable to him. So, dear brethren, let us "take heed to our ways, that we sin not with our tongues." (Psa. 39:1). There is nothing that is of so powerful an influence as the tongue. The influence of a good word, a good thought, may become worldwide; an evil thought, an evil word, may also extend its influence to the end of the world. Z. '11: 126, 127.

Our Great Burden-Bearer

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."—I Peter 5:7.

THESE comforting words of the Apostle Peter are addressed to the Church of Christ; and all who are of the Lord's people surely realize that there are cares and difficulties of life which are our portion and which are preplexing. These cares of life come also to those who are of the world—to some more and to some less. But they **surely** come to all who are the Lord's children.

The word **care** is used in two different ways. Thinking of the word in the sense of exercising proper thought and giving proper attention to that which is entrusted to us, or concerning which we are responsible, we might be in danger of misunderstanding our text. The word **care,** however, very often has in it the thought of **worry, trouble of mind;** and this is its use by the Apostle in this place. The Apostle Paul also says, "Be careful for nothing"—be worried about nothing, have anxiety about nothing. So we might render the words of St. Peter, "Casting all your **anxiety** upon Him; for He is taking thought for you."

Importance of Little Things

The Apostle's advice is not that we shall throw off all sense of responsibility, and cease to exercise care in what we do and in respect to our duties and obligations. Surely we all agree that the man or the woman without care for anything, in this proper sense, would be totally unfit for any position in life. We often notice evidences of some one's not having been sufficiently careful. Perhaps the wall paper has been carelessly marred or the furniture scratched; doors are slammed or left swinging when they should be closed for warmth, etc. Some might say, Oh, these are very small matters! But one who is careless, thoughtless, and inattentive to these matters is very likely to be untrustworthy in larger matters.

Personally, it is painful to us to see these things; and undoubtedly it is so to all who exercise proper care. The children of God, His representatives before men, should not go blundering along through the world or needlessly annoying others, whether it be the brethren or people of the world. Our influence for good may be greatly marred by inattention to what might be called little things, but what in reality are not so. There is a trite saying which is full of meaning: "Trifles make perfection; and perfection is no trifle." **The Lord's people should be the most careful people in the world.**

Our Lord said, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much"; and the reverse of the statement would be equally true—that he that is unfaithful in that which is least is unfaithful also in much. (Luke 16:10.) **These little things of everyday life may prove to be more crucial tests of real character than will seemingly larger matters.** Little courtesies, little acts of thoughtful consideration for others, how much they mean! How greatly they often affect the happiness of those around us and our own influence as ambassadors of Christ! So we need to exercise much care and thoughtfulness in regard to our words, our actions and everything with which we have to do. This is not the care that we are to cast upon the Lord for Him to bear. This we are properly to bear ourselves.

Our Experiences Supervised by the Lord

God is the most careful Being in the Universe, we may be sure. He is not **careful,** in the sense in which the word is used in our text—in the sense of worry and unrest of mind—but He is care-full in the right and proper sense. There are cares that come to the Lord's people because they are harassed by the Adversary. These experiences the Lord permits for the very purpose of leading His people to cast their care upon Him, of bringing them closer to Himself, of teaching them patient endurance, of showing them more fully their need of Him, their utter helplessness and wretchedness without Him.

But worries and frettings—anxieties that would hinder us in the Lord's service, that would rob us of our peace in the Lord—should be dropped, not carelessly, however, but intelligently, with the thought that Jesus, our great Burden-bearer, has invited us, yea, urged us, to cast all our care—all that would disturb our peace—upon Him. He will make our burden light and ease our tribulations. This is a rest of faith, and cannot be attained otherwise than through faith in His love, faith in His promises.

Our Father's Care for His Children

Each day that a Christian lives he should be more reliant upon the Lord. He should realize more fully than before that our Heavenly Father, who has provided for the grass of the field and for the birds of the air, cares far more for His children than for the flowers or for many sparrows, and that He has a Plan also for the world—an arrangement for their blessing, in due time. But we have already entered into the blessing of the Lord; we have already become His children, and are His especial care. And "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him"—those that reverence Him.

We cannot be faithful children of God if we are full of worry. Worry is one thing, but proper carefulness is another. We should be more careful every day, and thus be able to fulfil our obligations to the world in general, to our families, to ourselves, to the brethren, and to the Lord—to render our God more effective service.

We are not to be troubled and anxious as to where we are to get our next suit of clothes. We have a suit of clothing for the present, such as the Lord has seen fit to give; and we are to do our best to provide the things needful. If the Lord should never give us apparel as good as many others have, or as rich or dainty food, we should not worry, but be content with whatever His providence arranges for us, and accept it thankfully. He will give what is best—what is for our good as New Creatures. We should not doubt, nor fear that He will not provide for our needs. He knows all about our affairs, and is not unmindful of our welfare. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."

How needful this humility before God, and how consoling and precious this loving assurance! As we go on in this blessed way marked out by our Lord, let us learn more and more fully that we are not to ask anything according to our wills, but only that His will may be done in us and for us. His wisdom is unerring. Let us tell the Lord all about our burdens, great and small, and let us appropriate to ourselves His love and sympathy, applying to our hearts the balm of His Word, of the precious promises which are the heritage of His own, trusting Him that He is both able and willing to supply our every need—yea, that He delights thus to bless us, if we abide in His Love.

"How strong and sweet my Father's care!
The words like music in the air,
Come answering to my whispered prayer—
'He cares for thee!'

"Then naught can hurt me, shade or shine,
Nor evil thing touch me or mine,
Since Thou with tenderness Divine
Dost care for me!" Z. '14: 230-231

"My Soul, Be On Thy Guard"

While, as the Apostle predicted, "perilous times" are upon us, in which some in the Church will "stumble" and some "fall," and when "the love of many shall wax cold," let us not forget that it is "he that endureth (faithfully) to the end (of his trial), the same shall be saved." Remember the Apostle's advice, to take trials and oppositions and misrepresentations cheerfully, joyously, patiently, knowing that, so endured, they will "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But, as the Apostle adds, to secure such blessed results from trials, persecutions and oppositions, we must remember to "look not at the things that are seen (earthly things and prospects), but at things that are unseen (the heavenly and eternal things)." We are to endure "as seeing him who is invisible." Greater is he that is with us than all that be against us. (Heb. 11:27; 1 John 4:4-8). "Who is he that will harm you (really), if ye be followers of that which is good?" (Read 1 Pet. 3:13-16; Rom. 8:31-39.) The opposition of evil can work only good to "the elect," those who are called according to God's purpose. To all who are of the true Zion the promise is, "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper."

When that noble servant of God, John Wesley, was zealous in opposing Satan, and preaching a full consecration to God, he provoked Satan's enmity, and the latter found mouthpieces amongst ambitious and jealous "false brethren" who spread abroad vile rumors from time to time, not only assailing his teachings, but even his moral character. His plan was to make no defence. He argued that if he should engage in personal disputes it would be just what Satan would want—a hindrance to his work. Finally, however, when a most malicious rumor, reflecting on his moral character, was started by some prominent persons, and the entire work seemed likely to be greatly injured by it, his brother Charles and some others came to him, and said, John, you must answer this charge or your reputation is gone.

John replied in substance thus,—No; I will keep right along with my work. When I consecrated myself to the Lord, I gave him my reputation as well as all else that I possess. The Lord is at the helm! Our Lord Jesus by his faithfulness, "made himself of no reputation," and was crucified as a blasphemer and between outlaws, yet he opened not his mouth! No, I will make no defence.

A certain class, evil at heart, would believe the evil reports regardless of my denials; and those thus alienated will no doubt, as in the early Church, go "out from us because they were not of us." "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and will keep his own; and none shall pluck them out of his hand. Besides, the Lord may see that some are thinking of me, rather of him and his message which I seek to declare.

The results we all know. The message of holiness with faith swept over the world, and its influence is not yet lost. And John Wesley is still loved for his work's sake in every civilized part of the world; but his traducers are forgotten. There is a lesson in this for all, as an illustration of the Lord's words—"In quietness and in confidence shall be our strength."

Wherefore, dearly beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.—I. Pet. 4:12, 13. Z. '96:67.

A Snare--A Trap--A Stumbling Block

"And David saith, Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see."—Rom. 11: 9, 10.

THEIR "table" signifies their food; and the table or food spread before fleshly Israel, God's fleshly children, consisted of those special favors and promises of God to them as his Chosen People. (Matt. 15:26, 27.) Thus seen, it was God's goodness and favor toward them that stumbled and entrapped them and prejudiced their unconsecrated hearts. They presumed upon God's favor. They said within themselves, "We have Abraham to our father." (Matt. 3:9). They concluded that God must keep his promises to Abraham and that they, being his children, the Kingdom to bless the world must sooner or later be themselves. They trusted in themselves and despised others; they became arrogant, haughty and self-confident, and hence that much the less the humble spirited that the Lord sought, for his spiritual Israel.

Pride Led to Oversight of Certain Scriptures Foretelling "The Sufferings of Christ"

Their pride led them to look only at the promises of glory and honor and power to accompany the exaltation of Israel, and led them to ignore the passages which tell that Messiah must first be rejected and "led as a lamb to the slaughter" and "pour out his soul unto death," being smitten for our sins, "the chastisement of our peace being laid upon him."

Thus their "table" became their "trap," which still holds them tightly—their pride of heart, built upon those promises, still blinds them. But we should notice carefully that their stumbling was not because of any wrong done them by God. No; "his way is perfect." "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from our Father." "He is not a God of confusion" and "he is the same yesterday, today and forever." The "table" which he provided was good. **The entire difficulty was that Israel's consecration was incomplete**; hence the majority of them were not of the class whom the Lord intended should know the truth before the Messianic Age, when the eyes of all shall be opened and all shall come to an accurate knowledge of the Truth.

The Things Written Were Specially For Our Learning

. . . . **These things were written for our learning upon whom the ends of the Ages are come.** (I. Cor. 10:11). As fleshly Israel was a shadow or type of spiritual Israel, so the stumbling, trapping, snaring in the Harvest of their Age foreshadowed a similar sifting out of all except a faithful "remnant" here.

Here, as there, many in nominal spiritual Israel are not Israelites but "hypocrites," and of their father the Devil. Here, as there, all who are really of Israel and before whom the "table" of God's bounties has been spread with Providential care—"exceeding great and precious promises"—all of these do not digest and appropriate God's promises to the upbuilding of characters pleasing to God and fit for the Kingdom; and hence, even while feeding at his "table," such receive the grace of God in vain. To these, as well as to their prototypes, the "table" of Truth which they delight in is sure to become a snare, a trap, a stumbling-block. . . .

Only those who have at least some hunger and thirst after righteousness (Truth) are at all welcomed at this "table"; it is the **children's** table and others than God's true children may gather and eat only the crumbs that fall from it.

Unlawful for Any Except the Priests to Eat the Shewbread

It is the table of the consecrated believers at which others "have no right to eat." (Heb. 13:10). The truly consecrated are the antitypical or Royal Priesthood, whose "table" was typified in the Tabernacle and in the Temple by the table of shew-bread, of which it was not lawful for any except the priests to eat. If, therefore, you have "tasted that the Lord is gracious"; if you have "tasted of the good Word of God"; if you have had "meat (food) to eat that the world knoweth not of"; if you have tasted the "present truth"—"meat in due season"—it implies either that you are one of the consecrated ones, one of the Royal Priests, or else that you are in contact with them and receiving crumbs from THEIR "table."

The giving of all Truth, and especially "present truth," implies an object. That object is the sanctifying or setting apart to God, and to his holy service. . . . The full table of bounties is for those who have taken the step of fully consecrating themselves, their wills, and their all to the Lord—and the bountiful supply of exceeding great and precious promises then granted to them is that by these they might be strengthened and enabled to carry out fully, step by step, the full consecration they have made—even unto death.

The object of our consecration and subsequent disciplining under the guidance and power of the Truth is for the formation of **character**, for "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." The

Apostle clearly shows the object of our precious promises, our spiritual food, saying, "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us **cleanse ourselves** from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." (II. Cor. 7:1.) He assures us that knowledge may be received and used for a different purpose and produce a bad, instead of good effect and puff up or make proud and self-willed.

What Effect Has the Truth Upon Our Hearts?

It becomes each of us to ask himself the questions, Have not I received considerable knowledge of the Truth—of God's Character and Plan? Has it had the bad effect of puffing me up and making me feel that I am somebody? Has it caused a self-satisfied feeling, which ignores my own weaknesses and failings and merely relies on God's mercy and seeks to exaggerate that mercy and to ignore Scripture texts which clearly show that "God is angry with the wicked every day"; that "the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness," for "all unrighteousness is sin"; that whosoever committeth sin (wilfully) is (a child) of the Devil," and that "all the (intelligently and wilfully) wicked will God destroy"? Or has it caused me to feel more humble and dependent on the giver of all good? And has it, properly, caused me to feel Divine approval and rest and security, only under the merit of the precious blood when I am using my best endeavors for righteousness, godliness, purity and Truth?

The latter is the only legitimate and proper use of the Truth. If the true view of God's character, seen in his Plan and the exceeding great and precious promises held out to the overcomers, reaching our ears and our hearts, fails to awaken there a responsive adoration of things that are true, things that are honest, things that are just, things that are pure and things that are lovely, and a desire to be more and more transformed to that Godlikeness and accordingly to cleanse ourselves from ALL filthiness of the flesh and spirit and to become more and more perfected in holiness—if these are not the effects of the Truth upon our flesh and our spirits (minds, dispositions) we are **receiving the grace of God in VAIN**; for it was given for no other purpose. And if we receive God's grace and Truth in vain, we may be sure it will be but a little while until it will slip from us and be replaced by misconceptions.

Let us, therefore, take heed to the illustration given us in God's typical people, lest our table, so bountifully spread and served by the Master himself, become to us a snare, a trap and a stumbling block into blindness—the "outer darkness" of the world, because of a failure to properly use its blessings already received.

"Let us fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest (by full consecration and perfecting holiness in our hearts and conduct and thus developing our characters and being changed from glory to glory into the likeness of God's dear Son) any of us should seem to come short of it."—Heb. 4:1. Z. '11:83-85.

Be of Good Cheer

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—Jno. 16: 33.

CONSTANTLY aware of their own imperfections and shortcomings, it is not surprising that the children of God often feel greatly cast down and almost discouraged. The more we look into the perfect law of God, the more we feel our inability to measure up to its requirements. And as we look at the noble example of Christian character presented in the Scriptures, we seem to forget that, with the exception of the perfect example, they were all men and women imperfect like ourselves, and like ourselves earnestly struggling against the downward current of a fallen nature.

It was to such that Jesus said, Be of good cheer. He knew the imperfections of these his disciples; he knew how they would all shortly forsake him through fear, and leave him alone to suffer and die. Yet Jesus loved them, and declared that his Father also loved them. "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I come out from God. (V. 27). As we read the loving words of counsel, encouragement and warning, and the fervent prayer of our Lord for these disciples, whom he was about to leave in the world, we are constrained to say, Behold how he loved them!

And then we find that his disciples of today—you and I—were also mentioned in that prayer when he said "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Then too we see how his love reached out to all the world, when he added—"that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Though his own soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, his heart yearned with compassion for the beloved ones whom he was serving at the cost of his life. He knew the temptations, the persecutions, and the painful crucifying of the human nature, which they must all undergo before they would be prepared to be with him in glory, and he had compassion for them.

Though eighteen hundred years have passed since Jesus left his little flock to follow in his footsteps in the narrow way, his love has not grown cold. With deepest interest he watches our course, and rejoices with us as the time draws near for our union with him in glory. Every trial we cheerfully and lovingly bear for his dear sake—the Truth's sake, endears us the more to him, and brings us into closer union and fellowship. Though our copy of the Master's example is very imperfect, because of inherited weaknesses, it is accepted as perfect, because our desire and effort is to make it so, our deficiency being all covered by the Redeemer's merit—"Be of good cheer" therefore; "I have overcome." His perfection is imputed to us through faith. And now this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Without faith it is impossible to overcome. Z. April, '86:5.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Here is an important feature. It is not sufficient that we see glorious things of the Divine purpose, not sufficient that we believe them, not sufficient that we rejoice in them. We must be willing also to STAND the test of being strangers and pilgrims in the present time. Those who cannot stand this test will not be accounted **worthy** of a share in those glorious things. Z. '09:136.

◆

If obedience to the Lord and to the Truth brought us into the light, disobedience or loss of the Spirit of the Lord undoubtedly will lead out of the light into the darkness prevalent all about us—not necessarily on every subject, for amongst those outside the light of Present Truth, truth and error prevail in a mixed and confusing manner. Z. '09:54.

◆

If our devotion to the Lord be **absolute,** fully in control of our thoughts and words and doings, our liberty and largest ambition will be rightly directed and eventuate in blessings to ourselves and to others. But if the Divine will be not first and absolutely in control of our wills the more ambition and the more liberty we have the greater will be our danger. Where the Lord is not reverenced, obeyed with all the heart, mind, soul and strength, someone else has an influence in our hearts, husband or wife, parents or children or, more than probably, self. We cannot be "overcomers" except as our hearts are absolutely loyal to the Lord, with self-will and every other will subjected to the Divine will. This is the lesson of life to those who would come off conquerors. Z. '09:236.

◆

Our Heavenly Father considers our frame; He knows our weakness: and as the Apostle declares, we shall be saved from wrath through Christ our Redeemer.—Romans 5:8-10.

Toward all such as love and reverence Him, and who are in covenant relationship with Him—and hence under the robe of our dear Redeemer's righteousness—God has compassion far beyond that of any earthly parent. As high as the heaven is above the earth, so great is His love for such; and as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed their transgressions—laying our sins upon His own spotless Lamb, our Redeemer, and imputing His purity to all who will accept it. And not only does God's blessing rest upon these His saints, but in some degree it follows even to their children. Z. '17:333.

◆

St. Paul's courageous life reminds us of the words of the poet:—

"Be not like dumb, driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife."

God is seeking only for heroes now. By and by he will deal with the remainder, helpfully. The "elect" must all be courageous, "conformed to the image of his Son"—heroes. Hence the promises to the Church are "to him that overcometh." Z. '09:374.

The Lord himself took, and directs his followers to take;—the "narrow way." Let us each see to it most carefully that we worship and serve the Lord only, and that we follow only his directions. All other voices, except those which merely re-echo the Shepherd's voice lead more or less astray. All other paths are violations of our engagements with the Lord. In victories over such temptations we are overcoming the world: and in order to have such victories and to overcome the world absolute faith in the Lord is indispensable. We must realize that, however matters may appear on the surface, the Lord's **way, the narrow way, is the best way, and the only way,** that leads to the prize of our high calling in his Kingdom. Z. '98:13.

◆

Satan still "works in the hearts of the children of **disobedience.**" Let us all, therefore, beware of this spirit of disobedience in our hearts—of any alienation from the Lord or disposition to insubordination to his Word and providential leading. The sentiment of our hearts should be, "I delight to do thy will"; thy will, O Lord, not mine, be done—in thy time and through whatever channels thou art pleased to use. Z. '09:269.

◆

How human nature repeats itself! As it was God's covenanted people—yea, and the chief of the synagogue who opposed the Gospel and maltreated its servants who sought merely to do them good—so all through the age the professed servants of God have been the persecutors of their brethren! And so it is today! The slanders, the misrepresentations, come not from the politicians and the worldly, but from the Lord's professed followers, some of them of large influence. It is still true that there are "perils amongst false brethren" and a Judas spirit is to be expected now, as well as then. How shall we receive these things? If they discourage us or turn us aside in fear, it would prove that we are not worthy of the Kingdom privileges and honors, which are to be granted only to those who come off, by the Lord's grace, "more than conquerors"; to those who willingly, gladly, take the spoiling of their goods, their good names, earthly reputation, etc., rather than prove disloyal to the Lord and his brethren. Nor must we render railing for railing, nor slander for slander. We must take maltreatment patiently. Z. '09:107.

◆

"God gives you the **best** nourishment, although not always the sweetest taste." Z. Feb. '85:2.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle. Arrangements are being made by the committee to find suitable accommodation for the Lord's poor free of charge. Two meals will be provided free, for all, each day in the dining-room adjoining the hall.

He whose zeal and faithfulness and loyalty to the Master brings him to the point of persecution because of such faithfulness will be greatly favored. No one should act foolishly nor put himself in a way to be persecuted; but with calmness of mind and sobriety of heart should diligently and faithfully represent the Lord, trusting him fully as to the results. Z. '18:69.

Our salvation depends on our faith **in God** and our loyalty to Him. Many will talk of their faith and courage until it comes to the test: then their courage often fails. Too many begin the life of sacrifice without considering the cost, and with too many it is a failure. Z. '96:249.

Loyalty to the Lord, and faith in his promises, are COSTLY. The Lord has so arranged the matter, to the intent that only those who are willing to pay the price may enjoy these blessings. Only the faithful and the obedient are willing to pay the price. Thus the Lord proves his people. Z. '05:313.

As Israel in passing through the Jordan had nothing to fear because the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine presence stood in the midst of the threatening danger, so the Christian has nothing to fear so long as he realizes the divine presence and approval. Through rivers and seas of trouble he may wade, and through fiery furnaces of affliction he may pass, but none of these things can harm him while the Lord is with him.

The Lord's presence and love realized under such circumstances as they cannot be under ordinary conditions give such strength to faith and hope and love as could not otherwise be gained. And thus all things are made to work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose. Z. '95:196.

Let the loyal and faithful few be fully determined within themselves to be firm and uncompromising in their zeal for God and the truth, assured that, even though they may be called upon to go through a furnace of affliction, God will be with them in the midst of the fiery trial, and, as spiritual new creatures in Christ, they shall not be hurt—but blest by the Master's presence and communion. Z. 92:160.

If we are **positive** in our rejection of temptation it increases our strength of character, not only for that time, but also for subsequent temptations; and it disconcerts to some extent our Adversary, who, noting our positiveness, knows well that it is useless to discuss the matter with persons of strong convictions and positive characters; whereas if the question were parleyed over, the result would surely be the advancing of further reasons and arguments on the Adversary's part, and a danger on our part that we would be overmatched in argument, for, as the Apostle declares, the Devil is a wily adversary, and "we are not ignorant of his devices." Prompt and positive obedience to the word and spirit of the Lord is the only safe course for any of the brethren."—Z. '00:30.

We feel keenly for those who once were enlightened and had tasted the heavenly gift and the powers of the age to come and were partakers of the holy Spirit's enlightenment, when we see them go into the "outer-darkness" of the world's nominal church. Nevertheless, we must not murmur at the Divine Providence which thus **"sifts"** the chaff from the wheat. On the contrary, we appreciate the **light** the more, and prize the more all those who are permitted to remain in it; knowing that God makes no mistakes and that he would not suffer any to be deflected whose **hearts** were right. Z. '09:183.

We dare not stop. We must go on, whither the Captain of our Salvation leads. Much as we love those who stop, or those who turn aside, it is for us to say, "Where HE leads I will follow." Z. '09:41.

"Before honor is humility; and before exaltation is humiliation. Pride is a besetting sin of this age, and spiritual pride is one of the devil's strongest snares. Beware of these pitfalls." Z. June, '85:5.

Dearly beloved, let us again repeat the warning: "STANDFAST in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage"—NOT EVEN IN THE SLIGHTEST DEGREE. Z. Oct. '88:6.

The class to receive the prize is not only called and chosen (accepted), but also **faithful.** Z. June, '89:3.

A cipher alone has no value, but it is a power indeed, when it follows 1; and so it is with us when we follow Christ—his merit gives us association and co-operation with him; gives us weight and influence and power for God and his cause. "Ye are complete in Him;" "accepted in the Beloved." Z. '03:53.

That (the Adversary) makes repeated attacks is certain; and that these attacks come suddenly and without warning, and often with terrible force, is a matter of experience with all; **hence the necessity for sober and constant vigilance.** Be assured the ever watchful enemy will take advantage of our unguarded moments and our unfortified conditions if such there be. Even with all the watchfulness and readiness which we can command, the ability to withstand the enemy and to resist his attacks causes more or less suffering, and often taxes the powers of endurance to the utmost. Indeed, we must expect that the tension on our powers of endurance will sometimes be so great as to threaten disruption, and as to surely cause it IF we trust to our own strength. Z. '95:201.

Let us hearken to the voice of the Lord through the Apostle and close every avenue whereby the flesh might attack us in a moment of weakness or inattention. Let us throw out the pickets of prayer and watchfulness against every thought and word and act not in fullest harmony with the Spirit of our Lord. Let us thus by the aid of the VOW put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil its desires. Z. '09:152.

THE PEACE OF CHRIST

"My peace I give unto you."—John 14: 27.

Sweet gift of Christ! O blessed thought!
The peace of mind that God hath wrought!
No earthly passion's half so sweet,
No joy on earth is so complete,
As that the loving Father gives
To those in whom the spirit lives—
The peace of Christ.

The love of God! How its dimension
Reaches above our comprehension;
And who of us can understand
The workings of His mighty hand?
But rest, my soul, and quiet be,
Thou knowest this he giveth thee—
The peace of Christ.

So then, my soul, upon His breast
Thy troubles cast, and be at rest.
Though sorrow wrings the heart, and pain
Saps life and strength with steady drain,
O'er all these griefs and cares of thine
God pours the healing balm divine—
The peace of Christ. —Z. '96 : 30.

◇

"Grievous wolves" are ferocious wolves. For a time they may deceive the sheep by an outward manner and an outward profession, covering their wolfish nature. They and the outward conduct by which they deceive the Flock are Scripturally designated. "Wolves in sheep's clothing." (Matthew 7: 15, 16.) The Shepherd knows their character long before it becomes manifest to the sheep. But the docile, innocent sheep are deceived until these wolves begin to bite, to devour and scatter the Flock. The howls of anger, malice, hatred, envy and strife are noted in the Scriptures as "works of the flesh and of the Devil"—not works of righteousness, peace and love, the Spirit of the Lord. The wolf does injury with his mouth, and so do these "grievous wolves"—slandering, back-biting and doing every evil work. The Apostle warned the Elders of Ephesus what to expect, and his words were true. The same principles are still at work. The same warning still needs to be heeded. Indeed, the Scriptures imply that the severest experiences along these lines would come upon the Church in "the evil day" with which the Gospel Age would close, the time in which we are now living. Z. '16 : 236.

We cannot serve both God and mammon; we will please neither, if we try it. We will by a half-hearted service fail even to please the world, get its chief favors; and more than all, surely the Bridegroom would accept of and crown as an overcomer and his joint-heir, no such faint-heart. Let us not deceive ourselves; that is love in truth, which works by deeds and sacrifices, and consists not of professions of love merely. Let us each then, scan carefully his own life. Let each ask himself how his life must seem to the Master's eye. What does he who reads the thoughts and intents of the heart see to be your chiefest love, your chiefest aim in life? The world or even loving brethren, not knowing the heart, might misjudge you, but the Lord knows, and you should also know—whether you love him and his will more than self, family, business, etc. Let us not deceive ourselves, unless our love is active and full of that joy which esteems it a privilege to bear the cross in following Christ, it is not the supreme motive of our hearts. Z. June, '87 : 4.

◇

The messengers of darkness were never so active as in this "evil day" to overthrow the faith of the consecrated children of God: and never were their methods so subtle and so deceptive. Truly, they are calculated to deceive **if it were possible the very elect.** But thank God, that is not possible. The elect are those who faithfully, carefully study to know the will of God and are very earnest and faithful in doing it. Z. June '87 : 7.

◇

The various stops made by Elijah, on his journey, while expecting exaltation, represented trials, and siftings, and separatings, here. Those who were sifted out on those various occasions do not belong to either the Elijah or the Elisha classes. To such as were sifted out, it is proper to apply the Apostle's words, "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." I. John 2 : 19. Z. Aug. '89 : 1.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle. The meetings during the five days will be held at the "Masonic Temple," corner of Pine Street and Harvard Avenue. Take the Broadway or the Capitol Hill car, on Second Avenue, getting off at Harvard Avenue.

Interesting Letters

Dear Brethren in Christ:
Greetings in His dear name:

Your good and kind letters have been received and much appreciated. We have considered the matter of going West and cannot see that it is possible to do so now, mostly because of ill-health. Nevertheless we are trying to discern the Lord's leading in this as in all matters and should He open the way, we will indeed be glad to go. We appreciate the invitation and have a great desire to be present at the General Convention, and with the Lord's dear ones who have been so wonderfully used in helping us and others to Stand. Our absorbing thought is to lay down our lives for the Brethren, resigning present life and present comfort to Him. The thought continues to recur, "These are the dear ones with whom we are to spend eternity." We would love to stand by them in their last hours and render some assistance or share their ignominy.

We are endeavoring to permit our experiences to make us more and more mellowed, submissive, obedient, that our Present Lord may use us to the end. With the

Psalmist we would say, "Oh how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day."

"We congratulate ourselves and all the dear members of the Christ . . . that we still see the 'Mystery of God' and still rejoice in the fellowship of this Mystery." (Z. '09-372) and we are determined more and more to live near the fountain-head of Truth and, by the Lord's grace, to be faithful at any cost, realizing that fidelity for the Truth at any cost to the flesh is the distinguishing peculiarity of the overcoming Church of God. (G-303 and 4.)

We are very thankful for the privilege, fellowship and blessing which dear Brother ———'s visit brought us, and whenever it is the Lord's will for any of the Pilgrim Comforters to visit us we shall be glad indeed.

We are very thankful for the precious "Old Corn Gems."

Please let us hear from you as long as it is possible to hear.

Pray for us that His strength may be made perfect in our weakness. With sincere Christian love,

Yours in the service of the Master,

........................Va.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings and Christian love.

We do thank our Heavenly Father that the "Old Corn Gems" have been permitted to come to our home. We enjoy reading them so much, they are wonderful selections of that faithful servant's writings. May they come to our address so long as it be our Lord's plan. "His will be done."

About four weeks ago we enjoyed Brother ——— with us. What wonderful messages were brought forth, we finding our place as we came to understand the truth, especially that part of it which pertains to those who have come in late. Oh what wonderful promises are given to all that abide in Christ!

And today our dear Brother ——— left, after giving us four talks which were so encouraging, strengthening and beneficial to us in our daily lives.

And now we are rejoicing and glad that our class has heard from you saying that Brother ——— is on his way here.

May the Lord bless all His faithful ones.

Your Brother and Sister by His grace,

........................Wis.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings:

In reply to your inquiry regarding the "Gems," will say we all feel we cannot afford to miss a single copy of them. Our class is perhaps unique. Some years ago we were all of one mind when we were members of the I. B. S. A. When the division came all, to the last member, became Stand Fast Bible Students and all are now eating of the (old) Corn Gems. So far we have not lost one by testings and siftings. However one family moved to your own state and another to Oklahoma, but all are standing firmly.

Might state further that as a class we are contemplating moving West to be with the dear friends at the Coast. The Lord has truly been good to us. . .

With earnest prayers and sincere Christian love, I remain,

Your Sister by His grace.

........................Mo.

Dear Brethren in our Lord and Master:

We have been receiving the "Old Corn Gems" right along and we feel very thankful to the Heavenly Father and to you dear ones for them, and hope you will continue to send them as long as it is our Lord's will.

We have just had dear Brother ——— with us. He is surely a dear Brother and gave us such wonderful talks and thoughts such as we need just now in our every day life, and we are very thankful to our Heavenly Father for all these privileges. . . .

We ask that you pray for us that we may Stand Fast and prove faithful unto the end. With much Christian love to all the dear saints,

Your Brother and Sister in the Lord.

........................Wis.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in the name of our Beloved Lord!
May His face shine upon you.

I am thankful to Him and to you for sending me such wonderful words of Comfort through the "Old Corn Gems," which I would like to receive as long as the Lord may permit.

Your Sister by His grace,

........................Utah

To the dear Brethren at the Portland Office:

Loving Greetings in the name of our Lord and Master.

I have received your letter in regard to whether I still desire the "Old Corn Gems." By all means I want those precious gems sent to me; therefore fearing any delay on my part I thought I had better write right away that I am not understood as not wanting them any more. Several times I thought of writing again to you dear Brethren to tell you how wonderful the "Old Corn Gems" are at every issue. I heartily endorse your position and the principles you uphold, and assure you you have my co-operation in all the affairs taken. I am convinced that this movement is from the Lord, that it is His arrangement to comfort the little ones still remaining here.

Every indication shows that the time will not be long when we will be gathered home, and I am yet waiting upon the Lord to see His leadings.

We had dear Brother ——— with us, also heard him again at R——— last Sunday. I feel so grateful to my Heavenly Father for this privilege and the blessings received. . . The Lord is surely feasting us to look forward to another hard battle. It seems our joys are like flowers, they have their seasons, but I have learned to not murmur nor complain, for "faith can firmly trust Him, come what may." The foes are pressing hard to draw us from the prize, but truly as the hymn says, "Ne'er think the victory won . . . till thou hast gained thy crown."

With sincere best wishes and the Lord's continued blessings upon you all there.

Your Sister by His grace,

........................Wis.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Greetings in the Lord's dear name.

Your letter of the 26th received and I answer at once. Please keep sending the "Gems" to me for they are so good to the taste. They do the heart good and bless the ones that eats them. I know they have done much in stirring up the spirit within me. I do like the humble, meek and lowly spirit that is in the "Gems." . . .

Dear Brethren, I am Standing Fast by the Lord and His ransom for all, and for the Kingdom to come, and for the dear servant our Lord sent, which is Pastor Russell. That is one of the reasons I want the "Gems" to come to me right along. May the blessing of the Lord help you to Stand Fast in the principles of righteousness and truth as it shines in the face of Christ Jesus.

I thank you with a full heart for your loyal efforts to do the Lord's will.

Your Sister in Christ,

........................Minn.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle. Special arrangements have been made to take care of the children during all the meetings of the Convention.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle. It is expected that all the Comforters will be present during the five days. All are anticipating a great blessing. Surely every Standfast Bible Student will make a great effort to be present.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER TWENTY-THREE

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KEEPING OURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD

THIS thought of the responsibility of each child of God to keep himself, is set forth in various terms throughout the Scriptures. Our Lord said, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Our part is to do the watching and praying; to do our very best, and then it is God's part to overrule and direct and supervise our affairs so that all things shall work together for good to us, because we have come into this proper relationship with the Father.

We recognize that this Scripture and other Scriptures are not given to the world, but are addressed only to God's people, to "the sanctified in Christ Jesus." It is these sanctified ones who are to keep themselves. The unsanctified, unholy, have not made any start toward the Lord, and are not, therefore, in a place which they should wish to keep; they are rather in an undesirable place which they should seek to abandon. But those who have accepted God's terms, and have been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and have experienced an entrance into this "grace wherein we stand, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God," are admonished that they must keep this place, must preserve themselves in this position, must "keep themselves in the love of God." **If they do not thus keep themselves, do not keep their hearts with all diligence,-they are not of the kind that God designs to keep; they are the kind that he designs shall fall, and for whom he has provided special snares and diffculties that they MAY fall**—not into eternal torment, as some of us formerly thought—but fall away from the promises of God and the particular favors provided for the Elect.

The Lord has not predetermined what place we shall occupy in the future, but he is allowing our course to be influenced by conditions of the present life, so that all those who choose to be in harmony with God may follow in the footsteps of Jesus. There are outward manifestations by which the Lord's people may know their own standing, and to some extent may be able to know of their progress. In proportion as one realizes the spirit of Christ developed in himself, in proportion as he sees the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit, he may know of his own progress in the love of God, and may know also that unless he keep himself in the love of God, he will not STAND, will not maintain his place, but will fall; as the Apostle Peter says: "If ye do these things ye shall never fall." If we conform to the Divine arrangement, if we keep ourselves in the love of God, we shall, therefore, be preserved.

All those who are thus in Divine favor have the Divine promise and all the Divine power behind the promise, necessary to keep them. So, then, our text is in full accord with other texts bearing upon this subject. Those who are begotten of the Holy Spirit have the responsibility of keeping themselves in that holy condition of heart. They may not be responsible for some of the outward circumstances that beset them, nor for the condition of others, nor for the temptations that come to them. They may not in the fullest degree be responsible for all of their own course, because of the imperfections of the "earthen vessel"; but under the Lord's providential arrangement, if they keep their hearts, "that Wicked One toucheth them not," will not injure them, will not harm them. His besetments may serve to test, may be permitted of God to work out for them, if properly exercised thereby, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"; but the Adversary can do them no harm, because they belong to God, and HE is pledged to defend in the highest sense the best interests of all those who have given their hearts to him in full consecration. Z. '10: 252-253.

What a glorious Bridegroom! truly the chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely, and the heir of all things; for by him and for him were all things created. And all things are ours also, if we are Christ's—all dominions and principalities, all power and wisdom and might and glory and honor and blessing. And he is able "to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in his sight, if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard." Col. 1: 22, 23. Z. '91: 163.

◆

Those who in the Gospel dispensation make their calling and election sure, being counted the worthy seed of Abraham and heirs of the promise of God, will be such as have too high a valuation of it to part with it for a mess of pottage. Yet many who were called to this high office, like Esau and fleshly Israel, fail to appreciate the calling and, lacking faith and perseverance, ignominiously sell their high privilege as the prospective heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ. Z. '94: 64.

Everything throughout the Scriptures seems to teach that the Lord specially loves and appreciates those who are thorough-going, not only in their zeal for righteousness and truth, but also in their opposition to that which is unrighteous and erroneous. Z. '03: 74.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle, Wash., December 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 1919, and January 1st, 1920. Five days of glorious fellowship. For information regarding accommodation write Brother F. French, 4227 Aurora Avenue, Seattle. Telephone, North 2079. Other communications please address to Brother H. J. Brown, 1424 South 12th Street, Tacoma, Wash., Treasurer of Convention.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER TWENTY-THREE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18: 51.

THE MINISTRY OF SORROW

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!" "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"—Psalm 130: 1; Job 34: 29.

THE life of every human being has its lights and shadows, its heights of joy and its depths of sorrow. These make up a large part of the warp and the woof of experience; and the web of character which flows from the active loom of life, will be fine and beautiful or coarse and homely, according to the skill and carefulness with which the individual weaves into it the threads of experience. In every life, in the present reign of sin and evil the somber shades predominate; and to such an extent is this true that the Word of God aptly describes the human family in their present condition as a groaning creation. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now," says the Apostle. The children of God are no exception to this universal rule; we also "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the deliverance of our Body"—our company, the Body of Christ.—Romans 8: 22, 23.

But while we are waiting for our deliverance, the daily experiences of life have a most important mission to us, and the manner in which we receive them should be a matter of deepest concern; for according to the use we make of them, each day's prosperity or its adversity and trial bear to us a blessing or a curse. Those experiences which we are accustomed to regard as prosperous often have in them subtle dangers. If wealth increases or friends multiply or a large measure of earthly joy comes to us, how almost imperceptibly the heart finds its satisfaction in the things of earth! But when the keen edge of sorrow and disappointment is felt, when riches or health fail, when friends forsake, and enemies take up a reproach against us, the natural tendency is to despondency and despair.

Just here is a very important part of the great warfare of the Christian's life. He must fight the tendencies of his old nature and must **confidently** claim and **expect** the victory, in the strength of the great Captain of his salvation. He must not yield to the alluring influences of favorable outward conditions, neither must he sink beneath the weight of trials and adversity. He must not permit any experience in life, however hard and painful, to sour and harden him or make him bitter, morose or unloving. Nor may he allow pride or love of show, or self-righteousness, to feed upon the temporal blessings which the Lord in His loving providence has given him to prove his faithfulness as a steward.

Depths of Sorrow Lead to Heights of Joy

Sorrow and griefs may, and perhaps often will, come in like a flood, but the Lord will be our Stay and Strength in every experience which He permits. **The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the joy and preciousness of the Lord's love and helpfulness.** It is in seasons of over-whelming sorrow and grief, when we draw near to the Lord, that He draws especially near to us. So the Psalmist found it, when in his deep affliction he cried to God, saying, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice; let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!" (Vs. 1, 2.) Feeling his own weaknesses and shortcomings, longing for full deliverance from every imperfection, and prophesying of the bountiful provisions of the Divine Plan of Salvation through Christ, he adds, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities (imputing them to us), O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared (reverenced)." Vs. 3, 4.

How precious are such assurances when the soul is painfully conscious of its infirmities, of its utter inability to fully measure up to the perfect law of righteousness! How blessed it is to know that when our hearts are loyal and true, our God does not mark against us the unavoidable blemishes of our earthen vessel! If we come daily to Him for cleansing, through the merits of our Redeemer, our failures are not imputed to us, but freely forgiven and washed away. The perfect righteousness of our Savior is our glorious dress, arrayed in which we may come to God with humble boldness, courage—even into the presence of the great Jehovah, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

If thus God ignores the infirmities of our flesh, and fully receives us and communes with us as His dear children, we should so regard one another, considering not and charging not against one another the infirmities of the flesh, **which each humbly confesses,** and which they, like us, are earnestly endeavouring to overcome by the grace of God, to the best of their ability. To each one of the Lord's true children the words of the Apostle apply: "If God be for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's Elect? Shall that God that justifieth? Who is he that condemeth? Shall Christ that died?" (Romans 8:31, 33, 34 Diaglott.) The case is different, however, when the infirmities of the flesh are **cultivated, indulged in without proper effort to correct them, and are justified, in order that the faults may be continued.** Then, indeed, they are charged against us, and if we do not speedily "judge ourselves," and take decisive measures to correct them, the Lord will Himself judge and chasten us.—I. Cor. 11:31, 32.

In the midst of the cares, perplexities and difficulties that come to the children of the Lord, we are to trust Him fully, and to possess our souls in peace and patience! We are to **wait** patiently for the Lord to outwork the issues of our experiences in His own good way. How **necessary** is the patient waiting on the Lord! The Psalmist says, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning." (Psalm 130:5, 6.) In every experience of sorrow and distress, and when the strain of the jarring discords and the stinging vexations, and wounds that make the heart bleed, threaten to overwhelm the spirit, let the child of God remember that "HE **knows,** and **loves,** and **cares.**" and that His ministering angel is ever near us, and that no trial will be permitted to be **too severe.** The dear Master is standing by the crucible, and the furnace heat will never be permitted to grow so intense that the precious gold of our characters shall be destroyed, or even injured. Ah, no! If by His grace the experiences may not work for our good, they will be turned aside. He loves us too well to permit any needless sorrow, any needless suffering.

The Reward of Patient Waiting

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." (Psalm 37:5-7.) We must not be disappointed and allow our faith to falter when the test of patient endurance is applied, while the outward peace and quietness which we crave tarry long. Our Father has not forgotten us when the answer to our prayers seems to be delayed. Outward peace and calm are not always the conditions best suited to our needs as New Creatures; and we would not desire conditions in which the precious fruits of the Spirit would not grow and develop in us. Therefore, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice." (I. Peter 4:12, 13.) He who numbers the very hairs of our heads is never indifferent to the sufferings and needs of His weakest and humblest child. Oh, how sweet is the realization of such loving, abiding care! "When HE giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

The saints have indeed in every sorrow and grief a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly in ignorance. **None but the true child of God can know it.** What is this consolation? Oh, you who have never enlisted under the banner of the Cross, who have never put yourselves wholly into the hands of the Lord to be moulded and fashioned into His glorious likeness, who have never made an earnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of your own fallen nature, who have never contended earnestly for Truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of this Divine consolation? It is the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits on the battle-field of life, it is the stimulating, refreshing draught for fainting souls, hard pressed by the relentless foe. It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for Truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is Divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

How loving and tender is our God, and how wise and strong! His promises have **never** failed those who have put their trust in Him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, that the opposition from without and within is very strong. But it is when we are weak, when we realize our own helplessness and incompetency, that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. It is then that we may realize that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. **The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of our God, while we are striving to do His will; for "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust."** Then let us more and more lay hold of this strength of the Lord, that we may courageously pursue our course in the **narrow** way of difficulty and trial. Precious indeed to the saint of God is the ministry of pain and sorrow!

"Ye Have Seen the Patience of Job"

The saints of every Age have learned the blessing of afflictions and sorrows. The Psalmist David says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes": and again, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word." (Psalm 119:67, 71.) God's faithful servant Job suffered almost overwhelming troubles, but the Lord brought him out into a large place when his testings had accomplished their designed effect. He was proven and strengthened by his sore experiences. Few if any of us could suffer more. He suffered the loss of all his property, then of all his children, whom he loved, then of the love and loyalty of his wife; and finally, he was smitten with sore disease—boils, from head to foot. To crown all, three of his friends came to see him on hearing of his great trials; and instead of being true comforters, they added to his sorrow by insisting that his own sins must have been the cause of all these disasters; that his experiences must surely be punishments from the Lord because of unfaithfulness on his part. Surely poor Job was afflicted!

But did he lose his faith in God? Hear him: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21.) "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." (Job 13:15.) Job was indeed much cast down, but he maintained his integrity of character and his faith in the Lord through all. He did not charge God with injustice, and God did not desert His faithful servant. He reproved his accusers and required them to offer sacrifice, and instructed Job to pray for them, that their trespasses might be overlooked. In the end he was blessed more abundantly than ever before. God made him a great type of the human family, of the troubles of their fallen condition and of their final restoration to all that was lost in Adam, with the blessings of added experiences to make them wise. How faithful is the Lord in all His dealings! Truly His children should never doubt His love: for

"Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may."

Preciousness of Intimate Fellowship With God

It is when continued trust in the Lord and His many responsive providences in our lives have ripened into precious personal acquaintance and intimacy that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the Divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and the Son. Then, however dark may be our way, however severe may be the storm that rages about us, the the thought of Divine protection is ever with us, so that as the children of the Lord we are never in despair; though cast down we are not destroyed; though persecuted, we are never forsaken. **We know our Father's hand is ever at the helm, that His love and care are sure and unfailing.**

Those who have come into real heart sympathy with God have learned to see Him as the Fountain of all goodness and Truth and blessing. To them He is the One altogether lovely. His Law is their delight. His friendship and love are their very life. When the heart has become thus centered in God, it is the most natural impulse to commit its way unto Him. These can truly sing with the poet:

"So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight."

Surely these have the desires of their heart, and no good thing shall be withheld from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in the Lord's good time their righteousness, however much it may now be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil spoken of, shall be brought forth as the light—clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their course and of their hearts, shall be brought forth as the noonday. Even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, we shall be fed, nourished, temporally and spiritually, and shall rejoice and be glad in the "house of our pilgrimage." Precious indeed are the promises of God; and to the praise of His abounding grace, His saints of the past and of the present all bear ample testimony to their fulfilment.

"Who need faint while such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,
Never fails from Age to Age!

Z. '15:344-346.

Past Sins--Daily Trespasses

THE new creature needs not to apologize, nor ever to remember the weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh appertaining to the period preceding the sacrifice. By faith the new creature should remember that old things have passed away, and all things have become new, for thus the Apostle declares, "There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." Our Advocate did a thorough work as respects the sins of our flesh; they are past and gone through the forbearance of God. (Rom. 3: 25). The Father did a perfect work in reckoning us dead indeed to everything of the past, and in begetting us by the Spirit as new creatures—sons of God. It is for our faith to grasp the situation and to enjoy it.

However, as new creatures we are imperfect in that we have only the old body with its blemishes through which to serve the Lord. Because of antagonism of the legally dead flesh, "We cannot do the things which we would." What shall we do as respects our failure to come up to all the requirements of the Lord, because of our fleshly imperfections? Shall we say to ourselves and to each other, God knows that these imperfect things of daily life are not willingly ours as new creatures, and therefore we need not confess them.

We answer that this would not be the proper course. The imputation of Christ's merit to our consecrated sacrifice merely covered the blemishes against us **at that time,** but did not cover blemishes future. Hence, daily we should remember before the throne of heavenly grace the imperfections and blemishes of each day and hour, and should ask Divine forgiveness for these through our great Redeemer. Thus he taught us, "Pray ye, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." This would not relate to Original Sin, which could not thus be forgiven. It relates to our subsequent shortcomings, after we have become children of God through the begetting of the holy Spirit. Thus, the Apostle writes, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES"

Our Advocate not only imputed his merit for our past sins, but he is still with the Father and has an abundance of merit. Our Advocate has merit sufficient to cover the sins of the whole world, and therefore to cover all our blemishes. Hence, when we go to the Father through him, we may realize that provision has already been made for the covering of our trespasses, but that we can obtain forgiveness only through prayer. God doubtless intended a great blessing in making this arrangement. He intended that each time we come to the throne of grace, we should earnestly repent of our imperfections, and earnestly promise him that we will strive against them in the future. He would thus encourage us to earnestly seek to fortify our characters along the line of these weaknesses, that we might become stronger and stronger in the power of the Lord and in his might, and be strengthened unto every good work.

When thus we come to the Lord to obtain mercy and to find grace to help in every time of need, and promise continued and increased zeal in fighting the good fight, it puts us on our honor, as it were, and makes us more careful respecting our future course. If perchance we fail again along the same lines, we are properly abashed. Then comes an important testing to us. The suggestion comes that we should refrain from going to the Lord in prayer; that we should feel too much humiliated to go to him. If these suggestions be followed, the result will be alienation, coldness. The earth-born cloud will hide from us the heavenly Father's face. Even if we do not go off in greater outward sins, such a course would mean a loss of fellowship, which is very important to our growth in grace and knowledge.

"WITHOUT SPOT OR WRINKLE"

Every error, every slip, every mistake, is a spot upon our wedding garment and should be repented of and expunged. With great humility we should go to the Master that we might have such spots promptly cleansed away; as it is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us (new creatures) from all sin." Thus we are able to abide in his love. Those who neglect this matter may find themselves increasingly careless respecting the spotlessness of their robes, until perhaps, if they do not fall completely into the Second Death, they find their garments bedraggled and unfit for the wedding. The Bride must be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, and the arrangement on her behalf by her Bridegroom is ample to this end. Those, therefore, who for any reason allow the spots to accumulate, and do not have them cleansed, will have a further test and be obliged to decide to return like the sow to her wallowing in the mire of sin, and thus come under the condemnation of the Second Death, or else, as members of the Great Company, they must wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Z. '10:216-217.

The Sin of Ingratitude

"Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you." I. Sam. 12:21.

OF all crimes, ingratitude appears to be one of the most inexcusable, and has so been esteemed amongst all people and at all times. Lycurgus, the great law-giver and statesman of Greece, wrote, "I make no law, perhaps, punishing ingratitude; I leave that for the gods to punish." Amongst the Athenians, if a slave, being freed, was afterward convicted of ingratitude toward his liberator, he was sent back again into slavery. Someone has written, "Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul; and the heart of man knoweth none more fragrant." . . .

Gratitude not only is a fragrant flower, but is indigenous to the soul of every true and noble heart. Accepting this standard, we are bound to conclude that comparatively few of the human family are noble in this respect. Even amongst the Lord's people the grateful seem to be comparatively few in number. This agrees well with the Apostle's statement that amongst the called are "not many noble"—chiefly the mean things of this world." (I. Cor. 1:26-29.) But this describes what we were when we were called. Who shall say that amongst those who have accepted the divine call and been made partakers of the divine favors granted to all the sons of God, begotten of the Spirit—who shall say that these will remain ungrateful? Who shall say that the grace of God would not have a transforming influence on their hearts, so that however ungrateful they might be by nature, they would be so changed by grace that gratitude would be one of the chief elements of their disposition?

We believe that this is true; and that the Lord's people may in considerable degree measure their spiritual growth and development in this manner. If they find in themselves a spirit of murmuring and complaining against the Lord, it is a sure sign that they are ungrateful; for we know that he is faithful, and faith tells us that it is surely true that all the experiences of life permitted to come to us are working for our good. (Rom. 8:28.) Whoever has this faith can give thanks to the Lord and can rejoice even through his trial and sorrow. And if we have gratitude to God for his blessings and favors, if we cultivate the true nobility of heart which is impulsed by love and appreciation of divine care, it will make us appreciative of all the affairs of life and of all those with whom we have contact. We shall appreciate their good qualities, even if we cannot endorse all of their course; and whoever may do us kindness in the least degree must have our gratitude, our appreciation. Yea, with the Christian the standard must be still higher than this; for this should be the world's standard: as our Lord expressed it, "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same." (Luke 6:32.) The standard for the Lord's people is still higher than that of gratitude, though it must include this. Our standard is benevolence, a forgiveness of those who transgress against us, and who say all manner of evil against us falsely. Such as attain this degree of character-likeness to their Lord receive an extra blessing from him in proportion, and are bidden to rejoice and be exceeding glad, and to know that they will have a reward in heaven.

Gratitude is therefore a keeping power in our hearts, there to repel the suggestions of the evil one, and to stop our imperfect fleshly mind if it attempts to assert itself. Gratitude is closely akin to love; and where they dwell together in the heart, there is little room for the Adversary to get in his work. On the contrary, ingratitude signifies a blindness of the mind in respect to justice. It speaks a low standard of character, in which the fruits of the Spirit of the Lord have not been well developed. Surely in any heart in which the love of God has been "shed abroad," ingratitude to him or anybody would be an impossibility. But where ingratitude gains a foothold, it admits its relatives—selfishness, pride, anger, malice, hatred, strife, evil surmisings, slander, backbitings and other qualities which the Apostle enumerates as "works of the flesh and the devil." The Lord's consecrated people should daily search their hearts for any manifestations of selfishness or ingratitude, and should look well to the growing development therein of love and thankfulness and appreciation toward the Giver of all good, toward the brethren of the Household of Faith, yea, toward all with whom we have to do. . . .

"THE LORD HATH DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US"

"Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you."—I. Samuel 12:24.

Samuel appealed to fleshly Israel to remember the great things that God had done for them, as a ground for thankfulness and faithfulness—their delivery from Egypt, their guidance through the wilderness and their entrance into the land of Israel; but if we apply these words to Spiritual Israel, with what greater force do they come to us! The Lord has delivered us from Egyptian bondage, the bondage of sin and death. He has led us out of darkness into his marvelous light. He not only lifted our feet from the horrible pit and the miry clay, but he placed them upon the Rock, Christ Jesus; yea, more! he has put a new song into our mouths, even the loving kindness of our God. He not only forgave our sins, but accepted us in Jesus, and invited us to joint-heirship with Christ. He not only gave us exceeding great and precious promises to cheer our hearts in the wilderness journey, but has in reservation for us things exceeding great and precious, of which he has given us a glimpse or foretaste through the holy Spirit, an earnest of our inheritance.

Who that has gratitude of heart to the Lord for these blessings, who that is appreciative and thankful, would not be indeed seeking to serve the Lord in truth with all his heart! Who that is of this attitude of mind would fail to remember the Lord's Word and to seek divine assistance in complying with its requirements, remembering the statement, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." To such daily the commandments of the Lord amplify, enlarge. Daily he sees new forces, new meanings in these commandments. If he be thankful, if he be appreciative of the Lord's providence toward him in the past, the depths of meaning to God's commands would not be grievous to him; but he will still rejoice to go on day by day in sympathy with our Lord's words, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; Thy law is written in my heart." So it will be with us. As the Apostle says, We shall do his commandments, and they will not be grievous unto us, and this will be the evidence to us that we love God and that we are loved of him, and being sealed, impressed more and more by his Spirit, the spirit of truth.—I. John 5:2, 3.

"YE SHALL BE CONSUMED"

Of course there is an alternative. Those who do not enter into the Lord's service of a truth, with all their heart, those who do not continually and repeatedly consider how great things God has done for them, those who lack appreciation of his kindness and are resentful of his arrangement and leading, will be esteemed of him as wicked and as unfit for the glorious things which he has in reservation for the faithful. The Lord has made provision for the forgiveness of all of our inherited imperfections and weaknesses, and he has also made provision for our growth in grace and knowledge and love. While he is willing to cover our blemishes from his sight through the merit of the precious blood, he insists that we under that covenant shall develop the character which he has delineated and exemplified, the character of which love is the essence, and he rejects those who refuse to come to this standard of perfect love, or refuse all the provisions of divine grace; for it is not the Father's proposition to associate with his Son in glory any except those who shall be copies of his character. This he has predestinated.—Rom. 8:29. Z. '08:200-203.

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The Lord's tests are very simple, but very thorough. Z. '92:291.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle. The meetings during the five days will be held at the "Masonic Temple," corner of Pine Street and Harvard Avenue. Take the Broadway or the Capitol Hill car, on Second Avenue, getting off at Harvard Avenue.

Perfect Through Suffering

"Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared: though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and, being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec."—Heb. 5: 7-10.

THESE words of the Apostle give us an insight to the experiences of our dear Lord which help us to appreciate the load he bore for us in the days of his flesh. We notice particularly this expression—

"In the Days of His Flesh,"

because there are some who claim that in our Lord's existence there can be no distinction between days when he was in the flesh, and days when he was no longer in the flesh: for, say they, his resurrection life is his humanity, his flesh, glorified. Others there are who claim that he had no existence prior to his human life. But the reverse of both these ideas is not only implied in this statement of the Apostle, but is also definitely expressed in other Scriptures, e.g., "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise **took part of the same;**" he "was **made flesh,** and dwelt among us;" "Though he was rich, for our sakes he became **poor.**" Then he said, "**My flesh** I will **give** for the life of the world." (See Heb. 2:14; John 1:14; II. Cor. 8:9; John 6:51.) Yes, his human body was the body of his humiliation, the "body prepared" for sacrifice (Heb. 10: 4, 5), and which was sacrificed; and which, being sacrificed, was never taken back; it was **given** as the price of our redemption. Therefore he no longer lives the life in the flesh, the human life, but, having sacrificed that, he is now highly exalted and ever liveth as our divine high priest. "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now, henceforth, know we him (so) no more."—II. Cor. 5:16.

His humiliation, therefore, was not an eternal humiliation, but was followed by a glorious exaltation, even to the divine nature and to the glorious body which belongs to that nature—"the express image of the Father's person" (Heb. 1:3), who dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto, but which Christ's faithful followers may one day see; for it is written that "we shall be like him, and see him as he is"—not as he was. For this he prayed while he was yet in the flesh, saying, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me shall be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."—John 17:24. . . .

It is with grateful hearts that we accept the statements of Scripture that the Son of God was indeed made flesh; and we thank God also that his days in the flesh were numbered and few. With him, as with us, they were "few days and full of trouble." Especially after his consecration to the work of sacrifice, they were days of affliction, sorrow, disappointment and trouble, days that led him often to the throne of the heavenly grace to find help in time of need. It was our Lord's custom, therefore, often to seek the place of prayer after the busy days of service were ended. The mountains and the deserts were his closets, and not infrequently he spent the whole night in prayer.

It was from these seasons of secret communion with God that he drew spiritual strength, consolation and comfort. They were seasons of precious communion when he could open up his heart to the Father as to no one else; when he could tell him all his sorrows, burdens and fears; and when the Father manifested himself to him in tokens of loving approval and sustaining grace.

WHAT HE FEARED, AND FROM WHAT HE WAS SAVED

What, says some one, in surprise, did our Lord have any fears? Yes, the above words of the Apostle indicate the great mental conflict through which the Lord passed on our behalf "in the days of his flesh." This conflict began in the temptations of the wilderness, immediately following his baptism, and reached its culminating point in the garden of Gethsemane, where, probably as never before, "he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." . . . He feared, lest the promise having been left him of entering into the rest that remaineth and the glory to follow the day of atonement, he should come short of the full requirements of his office as a priest to render acceptable sacrifice. **So also,** says the Apostle (Heb. 4:1), **should we fear** lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should come short of it.

This fear on the Lord's part was not a sinful fear. It was a fear begotten, not of doubt of the Father's ability and willingness to fulfil all his promises, but of a knowledge of the righteous principles which must in every case govern the Father's course of action, of the inflexible law which righteously affixed the reward of eternal life and glory to his fulfilling of his covenant of sacrifice, while at the same time he began to realize that of himself as a human being, though perfect, his heart and flesh would fail unless reinforced by divine grace. The Psalmist expressed this fear of the Lord, and the source from which his help came, when he said, "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Psa. 73:26.) It was a filial fear, a fear entirely compatible with his relationship to God as a recognized Son; for

Though He Were a Son

yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. His continual recognition by Jehovah as a Son was a guarantee of his perfection, and to sin at any time would have been to forfeit that relationship. On the same principle, we, the Church, are recognized as sons of God, because we have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith.

And yet, though he was a recognized Son, and hence perfect, without sin, the Apostle speaks of him as being **made perfect**—as being perfected in **some sense** through a process of experience—of experience of humiliation and suffering. In what sense, then, we inquire, was he perfected? The answer is implied in the words of the text—"Yet learned he **obedience** by the things which he suffered; and, being made perfect (in this lesson), he became," etc. Although he was a recognized Son of God in whom the Father was always well pleased, and one who had never disappointed in the slightest degree the fondest hopes of that righteous Father; although he had always recognized the Father as the source of his being, and the fountain of all wisdom, goodness and grace, and as that superior Being to whom he owed the deepest gratitude for life and all its manifold blessings, in whom also dwelt all wisdom and honor and glory and power, and whose perfect will was therefore the supreme law, the expression of the most perfect righteousness and truth, the profoundest wisdom and the deepest love and grace; to whom, therefore, was due the most loyal and loving obedience at all times and under all circumstances; and although he was a Son who had always recognized and delighted to do the Father's will; yet he was not counted perfect in the sense of that established and demonstrated character which was the necessary requirement for the priestly office to which he was called. For this office he must be proved beyond all peradventure by the severest tests, and that before many witnesses, in order that all might know the strong foundation upon which they could build their hopes. It was for this purpose that his sense of loyalty was put to the severe test which it met in Gethsemane. Possibly even our Lord himself did not realize the strength of his righteous character until brought face to face with this last trial. There he was tried and proved to the uttermost, and under the fiery ordeal his character, always perfect to the full measure of its testing, gained by divine grace its glorious perfection of completeness.

Thus, through suffering, he learned obedience to the perfect will of God down to the lowest depths of self-abnegation: and God permitted it so to be, because such proving was necessary, both for the development and manifestation of that perfection of character which would be worthy of the high exaltation to which he was called.

It should ever be borne in mind that perfection of being and perfection of character are two different things. Perfection of being is the work of God, while perfection of character is the work of the intelligent creature, wrought out in obedience to divine law and under the divine direction and supervision. Adam was a perfect being, innocent, free and glorious in his pristine beauty; but in the work of character-building he soon failed, and hence lost his perfection. Character cannot be developed wholly without trial. It is like a plant: at first it is very tender: it needs an abundance of the sunshine of God's love; frequent watering with the showers of his grace; much cultivating through the applied knowledge of his character as a good foundation for faith and inspiration to obedience; and then, when thus developed under these favorable conditions, it is ready for the pruning hand of discipline, and is also able to endure some hardness. And, little by little, as strength of character is developed, the test applied to it serve only to develop more strength, beauty and grace until it is finally fixed, developed, established, perfected—through suffering.

In the case of our Lord, this valuable plant of character, perfect in its infancy, maintained its perfection through all the tests applied to it, until it was finally made perfect in completeness, being established, strengthened, settled. This brings us to the last topic of our text, viz.,—

To Whom Is Christ the Author of Eternal Salvation?

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec."

There is much food for thought in this introductory phrase, "And being made perfect,"—and that, too, as previously shown, through the painful discipline of suffering. Being thus made perfect, he is now a suitable one to fill the office of a high priest, a mediator between God and men. This office, it is declared, he will fill on behalf of all men who obey him. The disobedient and wilful, who do not love the right ways of the Lord, and who have no desire to walk in them, will receive none of the benefit of his mediation; but to those who do obey him he will be "a merciful and faithful high priest; . . . for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor (to assist, comfort, relieve) them that are tempted."

Ah, that was why he was first made perfect through suffering. The heavenly Father knew through what suffering, ignominy, shame and sorrow his beloved followers all through the Gospel age must pass. His omniscient eye foresaw the fagot, the torch, the rack, and the thousand refinements of cruelty with which Satanic ingenuity would fight the Church on her journey through this wilderness to the promised land. He foreknew how the fiery darts of the wicked, even bitter words, would wound them (Psa. 64:2, 3), and therefore "It became him (Jehovah) . . . to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."—Heb. 2:10.) He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, so that we might know that we have a high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and so come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:15, 16.) Ah, how carefully and wisely our heavenly Father foresaw and considered the interests of all his people! Through these glimpses of his character and dealings we can see how true were our Lord's words to his disciples.—"The Father himself loveth you."

But, aside from the process of perfecting for the office of priesthood,—through suffering,—there is the fact of the perfection of our High Priest, to be considered for our comfort, satisfaction and consolation. He is one who, though when surrounded by sin and tempted in all points to sin, yet "knew no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth." He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," yet acquainted with our griefs and bearing our sorrows. Through bitter experiences he was perfected as our High Priest—to mediate for us (1), by presenting to God an acceptable sacrifice which made our salvation a legal possibility; (2), by undertaking to cleanse, purge and purify us until we also can stand approved of God and blameless—

a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

The absolute perfection, both personal and official, of our great High Priest, and the fact that he was ordained of God for this office, is the strongest possible demand and incentive for the Church's obedience to him, just as the heavenly Father's perfection and office were the all-sufficient reasons to our Lord for his obedience to the Father. God has not set over us a novice, nor one actuated by selfishness, nor by any ignoble motive; but he has made us a great High Priest whose every command is wise and good and in love calculated to lead us on from grace to grace until we also, like him, shall be established, strengthened, settled.

The discipline through which he leads to this glorious end must of necessity be, in some measure at least, such as he himself experienced, a discipline of suffering. And since the Church is called, not only to perfection in righteousness, but also to share with Christ in the priestly office as members of His body, it is theirs also to follow him in the pathway of humiliation and sacrifice, even unto death. To obey him now, in this age, signifies all of this; for this is the will of God and the will of Christ, even our sanctification.—I. Thes. 4:3.

In submitting ourselves fully to this great High Priest, the Church has the fullest assurance of his love, of his perfect integrity of character and purpose, of his superior wisdom and grace, and that in all things he is actuated by the purest and loftiest principles of virtue, love and benevolence. Never once has he been swayed from the most exact line of perfection, though assailed by the fiercest temptations. Every exhibition and testimony of his character inspires the fullest confidence, so that obedience to him signifies progress toward perfection at every step of the way. And to those who follow in this way he is the author of eternal salvation. Praise God for such a High Priest!—glorious in his perfection and glorious in his office, one touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but himself having no infirmities, no shortcomings, no sins. If he were an imperfect human being with only some superior qualifications, but liable like ourselves to err, to fail in judgment, or to be moved by selfishness or inferior considerations of policy, or who with a beam in his own eye would seek to extract the mote from ours, well might we fear to commit ourselves to his direction, and wonder why the Almighty gave us such a high priest. But our High Priest is not so. His perfection is testified by Jehovah himself, and his great love for us has been manifested in a thousand ways, chiefly in that he gave himself for us. . . Z. '95: 105-109.

"The Evil One Toucheth Him Not"

"We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the Evil One toucheth him not."—I. John 5: 18.

THIS text is not a guarantee of eternal salvation to those begotten of the holy Spirit. It is not a guarantee of their salvation from trials, temptations, difficulties, etc., as some have seemed to suppose. It does signify, however, that those consecrated believers whom God has accepted and who have been begotten again to a newness of life, to a new nature, are under special divine supervision. They will not sin (wilfully) because their seed remaineth in them, the begetting power of the holy Spirit. This seed being in them, they cannot sin wilfully. If they should sin wilfully, it would imply that the holy seed, the begetting of the Lord's Spirit in them, had perished; that they were no longer New Creatures in Christ Jesus, for whom old things had passed away and all things had become new. It would mean that they had turned again, as the dog to his vomit and as the sow to wallowing in the mire—to sympathy with sin and things contrary to the divine Word and its Spirit.

The Apostle declared that our Lord Jesus, the first begotten of the Spirit, will keep all these younger brethren begotten of the Spirit; keep them from the touch of the Evil One, from the injury which Satan would otherwise do them. As we have already suggested, this does not mean that they will be kept from trials, from temptations of the Adversary, for even our Lord was exposed to temptations from him: and these temptations, trials, oppositions, persecutions, we see to be necessary for our Christian character and for our development in our Redeemer's likeness of heart. The promise, therefore, signifies that in the midst of these temptations of the Adversary the Lord provides his faithful with such protection, such defense, such assistance, as is not only necessary for them to come off victors but to keep them from yielding to temptation. It is in harmony with this that we are taught to pray, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One"—suffer him not to touch, to injure us, to overthrow us, to destroy us.

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

While the Lord is abundantly able to work miracles for the protection of his faithful followers and for their deliverance from the Evil One, and while we feel sure that if every other means failed, a miracle would be wrought in our interest, nevertheless we are not to anticipate that the Lord will use miracles, but are to expect that generally he will use means, and oftenest human instrumentalities, for the protection and deliverance of the members of his Body, who abide in his love and are seeking to do those things pleasing to him.

"IF POSSIBLE THE VERY ELECT"

From the day of Pentecost until the present time the Lord's dear sheep have been beset by the same great Adversary, and have had fiery trials, and have also had the protection of him that was begotten of God, the Lord Jesus, who is keeping the faithful from the power of the Adversary. But the Scriptures unanimously point us to the end of this age as a time for special trial and testing, not only upon the world but also upon the Church, for "judgment must begin at the house of God." It is respecting this coming time that the Apostle forewarns the Church, saying, "Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to STAND in the evil day." He implies that the evil day with which this age shall end will have the severest trials ever known to God's people, and that they will have the greatest need ever known for the armor of truth and righteousness. The same fact is referred to by our Lord in addressing the sixth phase of the Church, the Church of Philadelphia. He says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation which is coming upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth." (Rev. 3:10.) The seventh stage of the Church, the Laodicean, will come into that hour of temptation; and we believe that it is already upon us. What we would have all see is that the time ahead of us must be very peculiarly a time of trial and testing, else it would not be so strikingly referred to in the Word of God. Nor do we wish to arouse the fears of the Lord's people, to terrify. Our thought is rather to offer the consolation which will keep them in perfect peace; as it is written, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." The Lord's promises, exceeding great and precious, are enlarged before our minds at the same time, really in advance of the coming of the hour of temptation and trial, so that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished, thoroughly prepared.

Our Lord's words respecting the temptations and trials of the Church assure us that this class shall have nothing to fear, that they will be kept, that it will not be possible for them to be tempted, for with every temptation the Lord will provide a way of escape. Let us remember in this connection the Apostle Paul's words respecting our day and its trials. "God will send them strong delusions that they may believe a lie, because they did not have pleasure in the truth." (II. Thess. 2:11.) What we do desire is that each consecrated child of God may see the way of escape which God has provided and may use the same, and thus be in line with the Lord's provision and amongst those shielded ones, the very elect—"called, chosen, faithful."—Rev. 17:4.

THE WAY OF ESCAPE

If it be conceded that we are down very close to the hour of temptation, when the Evil One will be permitted to bring extraordinary delusions and trials to bear upon the world and the nominal Church, then we are in the time when we ought to be looking about us to see what way of escape the Lord has provided for us. We believe that many of our readers will agree with us that the Lord's special provision for keeping us from the power of the Evil One is the Present Truth. . . . But we may be assured that our personal co-operation is necessary to our deliverance. "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21) was never a more necessary command to the followers of Jesus than at present; and we may expect that the temptation of this hour will be considerably along that line of abiding in God's love. This in turn will imply a love for the brethren; as the Apostle has suggested, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I. John 4:20.) Indeed, the intimation clearly is that "The love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12.) A cooling of our love toward God will mean a loss of our desire to please him in our own thoughts and words and doings, which will include a cooling of our love for his service. . . . Various things will conspire to this end—the love of money, the love of pleasure, the love of self, the love of earthly things in general, all of which were consecrated, devoted, before we received the spirit of adoption. If our love grows cold it will determine that we are not such as would be worthy to associate with our Redeemer in his Kingdom glory.

In no way will this loss of the "love divine, all love excelling," be more manifest than in respect to our sentiments and conduct toward the fellow-members of the Body of Christ. The Apostle tells us of what our attitude of mind toward these should be, namely, that as Christ loved the Church and laid down his life on our behalf, we ought also to love the brethren so that we would be willing to lay down our lives on their behalf, in their interest. The love that would give up life itself for the brethren may certainly be expected to sacrifice smaller things in their interest. And indeed such are the tests which the Lord permits, declaring that he who is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in much. It is therefore for us to see, to note, to criticize whether or not we have this love for the brethren which the Lord declares he will accept as love for himself, and without which we cannot be his disciples; for this was the new commandment which He gave to us, saying, "a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you."—John 15:12.

It is easy enough to love some of the brethren. We are apt to love those who are about on our own plane and of our own style and liking; but the Lord anticipated this and said, "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? (What proof have you that you have passed from death unto life?) Do not the publicans and sinners the same?" (Luke 6:32.) It is easy enough to love some of the refined or wealthy or naturally noble or the educated, those who are on our own level or a little above, as respects earthly things. But this does not fill the Lord's requirement. We are to love one another as he has loved us. (John 13:34.) He commends his love to us in that it is to each according to his needs. The more noble, the less of the Lord's grace is sufficient for them: the more degraded, the more of the Lord's grace is necessary and will be supplied. Thus we are to love the brethren; for those who are less noble, yea, those whom the Apostle declares are amongst the mean things of this world from the world's view-point, will need our love the more because of a natural depravity and weakness and imperfection. And if we love as Christ loved, we shall be glad to give our lives to each and for each according to the needs of each, laying down our lives for the brethren in moments or hours or as each may need our help. Ah, what a new, what a different view is this of the love of the brethren! The practice of it would cut off some of our special fellowships with those who need our assistance little, and would transfer our fellowship and sacrifice of time to those of the brethren who need it more. And what a blessing, what an uplifting would come to some of the meaner ones, and what a blessing from the Lord would come more and more into our own hearts as we become more and more copies of him in thought and in deed!

We have already pointed out that the time of trouble coming upon the world will be a result of the loss of love and the outworking of selfishness—no peace to him that goes out nor to him that comes in, for every man's hand shall be against his neighbor—for himself This signifies almost a complete loss of confidence throughout the world. Shall we not suppose reasonably that this trial is the one which will begin at the house of God? May we not reasonably conclude then that the trial which will come upon the Church will be the same kind; namely, a testing of our love for the brethren and of our applications of the principles which the Lord has laid down for our dealings with the brethren? We believe that this is so, and that the Lord will judge his people along this line of love, which is the law of the new nature and the fulfilling of all law. Whoever lacks the spirit of love will possess correspondingly the spirit of selfishness, the spirit of the Adversary, the spirit of ambition, of pride, of anger and malice, and hatred and strife against all those who oppose or even seem to oppose his interests. Let us remember that such sentiments even in the heart, **though unexpressed,** are most dangerous to the new nature. Those who have such sentiments in their hearts are surely very close to the point where the Adversary would be able to touch them, influence them, injure them, bring them under his power, and very close to the place where the Lord would be willing to reject them from discipleship and to allow the Adversary to have them; even as in Judas' case, to whom the Lord said, "What thou doest, do quickly."

But let us, on the other hand, make use of the various blessings and instructions which the Lord has given us:—let us be strong in the Lord, in the power, the armament which he supplies in his Word, and let us see to it that the spirit actuating us is that of love, which will be ready to sacrifice everything for the fellow-members and to count it all joy thus to lay down our lives for the brethren. Let us remember that not only is there a special blessing to those who shall assist the brethren, even the weakest of them, but that there is a special threat against those who shall harm or stumble or injure even the least of the Lord's little ones. Z. '08: 294-297.

Jehovah's Abiding Presence With His People

"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."
—Exodus 33: 14.

THE Lord assured Moses that He would go with him, that he should have His presence throughout the entire journey to the Promised Land; for he had found grace in His sight. He said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Moses then besought the Lord, "Show me Thy glory." It was here that God put Moses into the cleft of a rock and covered him with His hand while He passed by and let Moses see His glory from behind, saying, "No man can see My face and live." . . .

So God promised Moses that His presence, His power and sustaining grace should go with him all the way. He wished Him to understand that he was not to perform his great work alone, without all-sufficient backing. "I will be with you," was the promise. The Lord's presence was indeed with the children of Israel in a very marked manner—continually with them from the time they crossed the Red Sea, guiding by blessings or by chastisements, as they should need. He was with them in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and by His presence in the Shekinah glory which covered the Mercy-seat in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. After the Tabernacle was set up by God's instruction, these manifestations of His presence, His power and His watchful care never failed. The pillar of cloud and of fire guided their journeyings; and when these rested, it was an indication from God that they were to abide where they were until the pillar of cloud or fire again moved from its place. . . .

The Lesson to Spiritual Israel

The experiences of Natural Israel have very important lessons for Israel according to the Spirit. A people originally a part of the world, we have been invited to come out from the world and to journey to a new Country, to come into a Heavenly inheritance. We are marching toward the glorious Kingdom promised us if we are faithful. There are trials and difficulties along the way. But our God has promised us, as He promised Moses His servant, that His presence shall go with us. Sometimes He **seems** to withdraw from us and to leave us to ourselves; but He does not really do so. He tests our loyalty and our faith in Him by withholding the **sense** of His presence at times.

Shall we, then, like Israel of old, conclude that God is no more with us, and turn again to the gods we formerly worshiped—gods of wealth or of pleasure, gods worshiped by the nations around us? Shall we give ourselves up to revelry, worldly merry-making and sin? Shall we forget all the way by which our God has led us, **all the great deliverances** which the past of our lives have recorded? Shall **anything**—either "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, or any other thing in creation, be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" Surely not!

The closer we live to the Lord, and the greater our faith, the more we shall realize the Divine direction, and the more we shall make use of the means He has provided for our strengthening and upholding. We may call upon Him in time of trouble; we may go to Him in prayer; and He never fails those who put their trust in Him and earnestly seek to walk in His appointed way. This being true, we may go forth upon our journey in perfect trust and confidence. Having consecrated our all to the Lord, we are to seek for His guidance, for His presence is with us, in all the affairs of our life.

Few have such mighty burdens to carry as Moses had. But all of God's children have burdens to bear, and important responsibilities are resting upon each of us who have taken upon us the vows of our God. Each member of the Body of Christ, the true Israel of God, is privileged to have the continual guidance of the Lord in every experience of our wilderness journey. Heavenly Manna is furnished for our daily sustenance. The Water of Life flows out to us for our daily refreshing, from the smitten Rock of Ages. Our Father's chastening rod restrains us when we are in danger, or when we wander into any forbidden path. How lovingly He brings us back into the right way, and heals our wounds, and graciously forgives our stumblings and weaknesses! Surely we may have implicit confidence in our Heavenly Guide. Thus we may rest in Him and be kept in perfect peace. Our hearts can truly exclaim with the poet:

"He has guided my steps where I could not see,
By ways that I had not known;
The crooked was straight and the rough made plain
As I followed the Lord alone.
I praise His name for the pleasant palms
And the water-springs by the way;
For the glowing pillar of fire by night,
And the sheltering cloud by day.

"There is light for me on the trackless wild
As the wonders of old I trace,
When the God of the whole earth went before
To search me a resting place!
Hath He changed for me? Nay, He changeth not;
He will bring me by some new way,
Through fire and flood and each crafty foe.
As safely as yesterday."

He who so faithfully cared for Israel after the flesh, who were a perverse and fickle people, will surely care more abundantly for His true, Spiritual Israel, who love Him supremely and are daily seeking more fully to know His will that they may do it.

The Apostle Paul, in warning Spiritual Israel not to fall after the same example of unbelief of Natural Israel, and thus lose their hold on the Lord, says, "We who have believed do enter into rest." (Hebrews 4:3.) It was unbelief that led to the disobedience and perversity of Israel after the flesh, and that led to their final rejection by the Lord as His favored people, to whom should apply the most precious promises. They have lost forever as a nation the special place of favor which was theirs by inheritance. What a lesson this should be to Spiritual Israel! And yet we see that today the great mass of Spiritual Israel are falling "after the same example of unbelief." And they, too, will lose the chief place of favor, which was offered them when it was taken from unbelieving Natural Israel. Only a faithful "remnant" of both Natural and Spiritual Israel will gain the great inheritance held out to them by the Lord.

The Glorious Inheritance of Spiritual Israel

Those who prove faithful during the present Dispensation shall inherit the most precious things which God has to offer, the secret things which were for ages kept hidden, but are now revealed to the true saints of God. The faithful of past ages shall inherit the earth as rulers and princes over mankind, during the glorious reign of Messiah. Gathered to these will be Natural Israel then living. They shall have a rich heritage. What remains for them in the ages of glory to follow, we may not know with certainty, but it will be a blessed portion, we may be sure.

The faithful of the present Age have been raised to "sit in Heavenly places with Christ Jesus"—"the Lion of the tribe of Judah." These faithful ones are the twelve tribes of Israel who are to reign with Him. These—only a Little Flock, in all 144,000—are of the faithful remnant of Natural Israel, who were gathered at the beginning of this Gospel Age, and the faithful remnant from the Gentile Church of this Age. (Revelation 7:4-8; 14:1-5.) These have "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," and which none others can know. "My peace I give unto you," whispers the Master to these. We have a rest of faith now; and we are assured that we who have entered into this rest shall in due time, if we faint not, enter into the complete "rest that remaineth for the people of God." This rest we shall enter into when we experience our glorious "change" in the First Resurrection, when we are transformed in body and made like our Lord, and shall see and know as we are now seen and known of God. We shall then be blessed with the exceeding glory which He has promised—immortality, His own nature—and a seat with our Savior in His Throne.

The God of Israel is indeed ever present with His true people. He never forgets us, but is constantly looking out for our interests, guarding us in every time of danger, providing for our every need, both temporal and spiritual, whatever is best for the interest of the New Creature. He reads every thought of our hearts; He marks every impulse of devotion and love to Him; He shapes all the influences surrounding our lives for our disciplining and refining, and hearkens to our every cry for aid and comfort and sympathy and fellowship with Him. He is never for even a moment forgetful or off guard. "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." (Psalm 121.) If we call Him in the busy hours of the day, or in the silent watches of the night, He is near to uphold and sustain and protect, whether we can realize His presence at all times or not.

How blessed the assurance of such constant, abiding care and faithfulness! No real child of God is devoid of these evidences of his precious relationship to the Father—the God of Israel. And the saints who have been called with the Heavenly Calling, and are faithfully responding, are His true Israel in the highest sense, heirs of all His choicest promises. How goodly a heritage is ours! Z. '14:295-297.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle. Arrangements are being made by the committee to find suitable accommodation for the Lord's poor free of charge. Two meals will be provided free, for all, each day in the dining-room adjoining the hall.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Misconceive, mistrust, misunderstand, misconstrue, misrepresent, misquote, misapply, misuse, mislead, misreport—here is a lengthy list of troublesome misses. Who has not seen a victim of their awful work? They have trampled upon and triumphed over the just. They have drowned out the voice of the innocent with their unrighteous din. The Lord himself suffered from the most of them. He was misunderstood, misjudged and misrepresented; and His words were misconstrued and misapplied, and are today. He heard Scripture misapplied, and at last suffered death through the misapplication of his own words. Can a disciple expect better treatment than his Master? Poor, frail humanity is always missing the mark. A good man may be the victim of all these troublesome misses, but no good man will entertain or employ them as soon as he finds out their character. We had better be praying to God for more wisdom than to be missing the mark with any of this list. "A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." It saves heaps of trouble to have a mouth that won't go off half-cocked, like a dangerous piece of firearms, and wound somebody. It is a mark of wisdom to keep the tongue still unless divine grace causeth it to move. Z. '91: 109.

◆

The Lord Jesus declares that at a certain time in the Gospel Age, and apparently pointing down to our day, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." The Revised Version given here is stronger than our Common Version rendering. It is not only **many** who will grow cold, but **the many, the majority,** of professed followers of Christ. How truly the Master's words have been fulfilled! Iniquity is inequity, injustice, unrighteousness. Our text might properly read, "Because unrighteousness shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold." Today we are in the time against which the Lord sought to especially guard us. How FEW comparatively have heeded the warning! Z. '16: 58.

◆

What a wonderful blessing that will be— to be made in the likeness of our Lord and Master! The attaining of this glorious hope means to receive life everlasting, life inherent—immortality. (1 John 3:2, 3; Colossians 3:3, 4.) It means that we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever and behold His Beauty. In all the ages to come the members of the Bride class will continue to increase in knowledge. (Psalm 27:4.) It means that those who reach this glorious consummation of their hope shall shine forth as the brightness of the sun in the firmament.—Matthew 13:43. Z. '17:214.

◆

The Church's sacrifice is **not to get the world free**, but to **get herself into a sacrificial condition.** Z. '11: 55.

As God had already arranged Israel's affairs before they knew about their difficulties, and perceived that they were hemmed in on every side, so the same God foreknows all of our difficulties and has arrangements made for our relief and deliverance, and is merely waiting for us to appreciate the situation and to cry unto Him in faith. "Before they call, I will answer." Another thought is, sometimes we come to the very end of all human possibilities. Then, and not till then, should we apply the words of Moses to ourselves. "Stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah." Z. '13: 217.

◆

What will most help us to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord?"

We answer, **faith!** Faith in the exceeding great and precious promises which God has given to us; and faith in God's testimony that the **narrow way** alone leads to the glory promised. Obedience naturally follows in the wake of such a faith. We believe, then act accordingly. Z. '98: 3.

◆

The genuine saints will not fall, even though some of them may for a time **stumble**; for the Lord will uphold such with the right hand of his righteousness (with the power of His truth). Isa. 41:10; Psa. 91:11, 12. Z. '91: 86.

◆

All about us are trials and vexations on every hand, and the man or woman who has become so superior to these that he takes cognizance only of the end to be gained by this refining process, and who therefore patiently and even thankfully submits to the painful ordeals in hope of the glorious end designed by Divine Providence, may also confidently rejoice in hope of the final reward of the overcomers. Z. '93: 12.

◆

What are the distinguishing marks of a ripe character? One mark is beauty. Ripe fruit has its own perfect beauty. As the fruit ripens, the sun tints it with surpassing loveliness, and the colors deepen till the beauty of the fruit is equal to the beauty of the blossom, and in some respects superior. There is in ripe Christians the beauty of realized sanctification, which the word of God knows by the name of "beauty of holiness." Z. '91: 110.

◆

The narrow way is too narrow to admit of pride and vain-glory. Z. May '87: 5.

◆

"If we **suffer** with him we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. 2: 12.) "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16: 24.) "He that loveth not less than me, houses and lands, father and mother, sisters and brother, yea, and his own life also, is not worthy of me." (Matt. 10: 37, 38; Luke 14: 26.) **Because FEW live up to these conditions, therefore FEW of the many called are chosen.** Z. '91: 92.

God will not permit anything to be done that will overthrow those who have the right spirit, the spirit of humility—the mind of Christ. Evidently Satan thought he had a great deal of ability (and he did have some) to become a king or ruler, but his ability could not be used of the Lord because of his lack of humility. Any creature's ability in the service of the Lord is measured by his true humility, and where humility is lacking, natural ability is nil. The same spirit actuated the fallen angels. The same spirit will work amongst some of God's people. Humility means a true and joyful submission to the will of God. If we find that the Lord has instituted a certain way to carry out His purposes then we should joyfully fall in line with that way and strive to perform what He gives us to do. Headiness, stubbornness, selfishness leads to dissension and disruption—such is not the mind of the Lord, but the mind of the adversaries. So surely as the Lord has marked out a way and we seek to go contrary to that way, we remove ourselves from His special protection and open our mind to the assault of the adversaries, and, persisting in this course, we must finally fall. Z. '18: 21.

◇

Let us, dear friends, see to it, being Israelites indeed, "heirs according to the promise," and having received of the Lord healing, forgiveness, and blessing, that we are full of thankfulness, full of gratitude, and that we spare no pains to express this, and that we do not seek to have it at no cost to ourselves, but rejoice to be able to render unto the Lord a fruit of his blessing and mercy and thank-offering. Z. '04: 301.

◇

The narrow way of self-sacrifice is so contrary to worldly wisdom that few find it in the sense of knowing or realizing it; and fewer yet, after finding it, will walk in it; it is so narrow, so difficult and painful to crucify the flesh with its human affections, hopes, aims and desires; so difficult to have a mind and judgment and will of your own and yet obey not their dictates, but crucify them. Z. Aug. '87: 5.

◇

Our trials and testings may be more severe, and unless we feel our own insufficiency and look to our Master continually, we shall be liable to depart from humility, to become puffed up with pride and haughtiness, the sure precursors of a fall. And again, if we look merely to our own weaknesses we will become so discouraged as to yield readily to the adversary's assaults. Our only safe position will be to feel humble and to realize our insufficiency; and to trust implicitly and always in him who has promised that he will never leave us, nor forsake us. (If there be any breach between us, if any leaving and forsaking, it will be on our part, not his.) We can safely trust our all to him who assures us that "All things shall work together for good to them that love God (with all their hearts)—to those called according to his purpose." We need have no fear of the ultimate results, so long as we find our wills fully submitted to our Master's will. Z. '93: 4.

◇

"HUNDREDS of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see." Z. Feb. '86: 7.

It is blessed to mark this oneness between Christ Jesus and the members of His Body. Our Lord does not selfishly grasp all the glory and seek to retain it for Himself. On the contrary, with loving solicitude He marks the progress of His Body-members as they develop in character-likeness to Himself, and says, "They are Mine; and I am glorified in them" (John 17: 10); and He would have them all bound up together with Himself in the Father's love. He would also have them with Himself, beholding and sharing the glory which the Father has conferred upon Him as a reward for His loyalty and obedience throughout all the crucial testings which came upon Him.

All the Divine family are bound together in one bond of love and fellowship and confidence and sympathy and harmony and common interest; and the honor and glory of one are the honor and glory of all. The Lord's prayer abounds with petitions for this oneness. Mark the expression—"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee" (Thy Spirit, or disposition, and purposes and aim being common to us all). (John 17: 21.) Hence He would have us adopt the same Father's Spirit, aim and purpose, and devote all our powers with zeal and faithfulness to the accomplishment of the Father's will. Z. '13: 105.

◇

Is there not every reason for us to believe that the Lord did not overstate the terrible battle between truth and error, when he foretold that a thousand would fall to one who would stand, upheld by God's truth and its messengers? (Psa. 91: 4, 11, 12.) There is every reason to think that the Master did not overstate it when he said, "If it were possible they would deceive the very elect." Matt. 24: 24. Z. July, '86-4.

◇

The Apostle's statement that our Lord was "tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4: 15), therefore signifies that the temptations or trials which Jehovah permits to come upon His consecrated people are of the same kind that He permitted to come upon our Lord "in the days of His flesh."

For this reason it is important that we notice the character of our tests. God is not testing us to see whether or not our flesh is perfect; for all along He has known that amongst men "there is none righteous, no, not one." The Father's tests for those whom He receives as sons are tests of loyalty to Him, loyalty to the principles of righteousness, loyalty to the Truth, loyalty to the Divine methods—a refusal to take our own way or to seek our own glory or our own ease at the expense of the Truth or of the Divine methods. Z. '17: 381.

◇

Remember, too, that obedience, even without sacrifice, is better than great sacrifices without obedience. Z. '91: 98.

ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Seattle. Special arrangements have been made to take care of the children during all the meetings of the Convention.

Whether we are on our knees or in the busy walks of life our hearts should go out continually to the Lord for His guidance in all our affairs and experiences, that we may serve Him in a manner that will be pleasing and acceptable to Him, that we may be shielded from temptations that without His aid would be beyond our endurance, and that He will in His own due time deliver us from all evil and imperfection and grant us a place in His Heavenly Kingdom. Dear brethren, let us constantly put into practice the injunction of our Master, "Watch and pray, let ye enter into temptation." Mark 14:38. Z. '16:23.

◆

"When alone, guard your thoughts; when in the family, guard your temper; when in company, guard your words." Z. Sept. '87:8.

Today it is more difficult than ever for the consecrated to see where duty lies and to follow its course of self-sacrifice. The narrow way is more difficult to walk in today than it was some time ago. Hence, while the number of consecrations has increased rather than diminished, the number who appreciate the real meaning of their consecration and who joyfully lay down their lives in the service of the Truth is probably smaller. Z. '04:313.

◆

It is safe for us to assume that the proportion of the consecrated UNWORTHY of a place in the Bride Company is greater today than it was in past times. Z. '04:313.

◆

The test of waiting in the armor will not be without its fruit. "Having done all, stand!" Z. August '89:2.

Interesting Letters

Dear Brethren:

We have had a feast of fat things since we last wrote to you. First Brothers ——— and ———, and then a few days later Brother ———. How it rejoiced our hearts to see their dear faces and hear their kind words of cheer and comfort again.

How kind our dear Heavenly Father is to us. We had not expected so much in these last days, but here we have also you dear ones selecting the choicest of the corn from the old crib and all we have to do is to eat and assimilate. Then we have a few here of like precious faith to share our joys and sorrows—mostly joys—for

"Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?"—

and we can say of our trials they are but "light afflictions."

We cannot express how much we appreciate your service and labor of love for the dear ones of like precious faith everywhere. It is surely a wonderful privilege to be able to serve the last members of the Anointed One. "Poor, tired bruised feet of Him," how much like our own natural feet they have had to bear, and how much of washing and cleansing they have had to have to make them "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." How often they have gone to the Throne of Grace all soiled and torn and bleeding and received the healing balm of our dear Redeemer's merit. But now, blessed "feet," we are so near the veil that His healing touch and tender smile smooths all the rough places and His sweet voice, through His Word bids us "let patience have her perfect work," for we are almost home.

I do not think any of us will be able to attend the General Convention at Seattle, but I am expecting to meet you at the General Assembly of the Church of the First Borns. Earthly things cannot bar me from that though they can from the other.

With Christian love. Your Sister in the One Hope,

........................Illinois.

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

Greetings in His dear name.

I wish to express to you my deep gratitude for your labor of love, in the name of our dear Lord, that you have manifested toward His saints during this past year. I deeply appreciate the love as manifested by the Committee of Seven, and by the comforting work as done by the several Brethren whom the Portland office sent forth in the name and by the grace of our Lord, to comfort and encourage us this past year in these very trying and perilous times. The Lord has been so good, so gracious, and so loving to us that we can surely say, "His loving kindness, Oh how great." And to know that He guides us step by step and will to the very end if we continue faithful—and that is what I am endeavoring to do by His grace.

The promises of God are very precious to me; they are my stay and comfort. I do so appreciate the "Old Corn Gems" for they are carefully selected I am sure to meet the needs of the present hour. There never was a time that I appreciated Pastor Russell's writing as I do now. There is such a depth of meaning and significance in them for the Stand Fast saint. Surely we know that he was that "wise and faithful servant" of the Lord. And through his nearness and closeness to the Lord we in turn obtain that knowledge that brings us closer to Him, and which enables us to appreciate His character and His great love for us. We have such a strong desire to show our appreciation and love to Him by our loyalty, faithfulness and obedience to the principles of righteousness. May the Lord richly bless you all . . . in your labors of love.

Your Sister by His grace,

........................Wis.

Dear Brethren:

"May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ bless you and give you peace." We have not heretofore expressed to you our appreciation of your labor of love in the Lord, and the many blessings we have received through "Old Corn Gems," but many times we have spoken to our Heavenly Father about it and have offered up prayers of thanksgiving and praise to him for his continued watch-care service of the dear "Comforters." How grateful I am for the power that has kept me from falling and has sheltered my soul "in a weary land," and that has brought me safely through the storm, to where today I dwell "beside the still waters," with no doubt or fear in my heart that I might have taken a wrong course. I am so thankful that we are continuing Steadfast in the "things which we have learned" through "that wise and faithful servant," Brother Russell. May the Lord's blessing rest upon you as you seek to do His will.

Your Sister in the Anointed,

........................Iowa.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in the name of our dear Lord.

I love the dear Corn Gems and would not like to be without them, so please keep on sending them so long as our dear Lord will permit it.

Praying God's richest blessings upon you, dear Brethren, I am, by His Grace,

Your Standfast Sister,

........................Wis.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

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THE ADVERSARY'S METHOD OF ATTACK

THE attacks of the Adversary are usually made through his angels. We are not to suppose that the Devil himself is in every part of the world at the same time, or in the minds of all the people of the world—nor even in the minds of all God's people. We are to suppose that wherever any of Satan's agents are there is activity. The fallen angels are ever ready to intrude upon the rights and liberties of humanity, and to bring them more fully into subjection, if possible. But they particularly endeavor to entrap the Lord's children. The Adversary seems to be always on the alert to enter the army of the Church and to try to make havoc in its ranks.

Satan acts upon the minds of humanity. The mind, being imperfect through the fall, has thus inherited tendencies toward sin. The assaults of the Adversary may come through human beings that suggest wrong thoughts to others. He probably gets in his work more often in this way than in any other. The Apostle urges all the children of God to let no evil communication proceed out of their mouth. Evil communications often have the effect of tearing down character, and every Christian should be on the alert, not only for his own protection, but also for the protection of others. **Each child of God should see that his own heart is kept pure and so free from guile that he will be in no danger of communicating evil of any sort to another by his words. We should carefully guard our conduct, that no thoughtless act of ours should be a cause of injury to anyone or bring a reflection upon the Truth, which we love so well, and to the service of which we have committed ourselves.** Z. '16: 148.

NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Send all communications and cheques, etc., to Standfast Bible Students, P. O. Box 21, Bellingham, Wash., as our headquarters have been moved from Portland, Oregon, to Bellingham, Wash.

We cannot at this point refrain from reminding the dear followers of the Lord afresh of what we have already amplified in Dawn-Studies, Vol. 6, Chap. 9, the course which the new creature should take in every matter in which he feels that a brother has offended him, outlined by our Lord in Matt. 18: 15-17.

Let us be sure that the Adversary will use every means to turn us aside from this plainly stated rule of love; that he will endeavor to make us think that it cannot be applicable to the difficulty which troubles us. Z. '08: 218.

◆

Persecution implies that the person or thing persecuted possessed some qualities or powers that are feared. When the persecution is for religion it proves that the persecutor realizes his own weakness to meet the arguments in a more rational way. It implies either that the persecutors are weak, or that the arguments of the persecuted are strong.

There have been persecutions from the earliest dawn of history. Cain persecuted his brother Abel to the death because the latter was right and the persecutor was wrong. It is safe to say that the persecutors are always wrong even if we cannot say that the persecuted are always right. The principle of persecution is a wrong one. Whoever, therefore, finds himself disposed to persecute another, either with physical torture or by harassings of slander and epithets should immediately inquire respecting his own heart condition, for there is surely something wrong. Whoever witnesses persecution, either physical or slanderous, should immediately decide that the persecutor is in error and should give his sympathy to the persecuted if he be able to do no more. He will thus be cultivating in his own mind a principle of justice—righteousness—which will make for his own character-development. Z. '11: 235.

◆

Beware, oh beware, of ever resisting the Lord's will even in the smallest way! Z. '08: 264.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." —I. Thess. 5: 21.

The Bellingham Ecclesia sent a resolution to the Committee of Seven, requesting that the Committee bring before the Church assembled in convention at Seattle all those Comforter Brethren and Committeemen whose differences have been troubling the Church for many weeks.

Some of the Brethren intimated their desire to be tried by the Church and willingly placed before the Church all they knew about the differences in question, while others left the convention rather than submit to a Church trial.

A full report of the trial and other business adopted by this convention is now being prepared. Be sure you obtain a copy so that you may know the facts. We remind you of the words of the wise man: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."—Prov. 18: 13.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Bellingham, Wash., January 30th, 31st and February 1st, 1920. For information write Brother B. A. Ish, Box 21, Bellingham, Wash. Further announcements will appear in Old Corn Gems No. 25.

SUGGESTION

We suggest that the friends carefully consider the article entitled THE GREAT ARMY OF THE LORD (Page 15) in conjunction with the articles in OLD CORN GEMS, No. 21, Pages 8 and 9, so as to get Brother Russell's full thought on this matter.

Published by the Standfast Bible Students, under the supervision of a Compilation Committee of three, Brother H. J. Brown, Chairman. Address all communications:—Standfast Bible Students, Box 21, Bellingham, Wash.

OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER TWENTY-T~~HREE~~ FOUR

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"Where a brother gives an interpretation of a Scripture which differs from that given by Brother Russell, and Brother Russell's interpretation seems reasonable and in harmony with the plan of God, then we believe it a safe rule to follow Brother Russell's interpretation, for the reason that he is the servant of the Church, so constituted by the Lord for the Laodicean period; and therefore we should expect the Lord to teach us through Him. Where there arises a doubt in the mind as to which interpretation is correct, then it is always safer to resolve that doubt in favor of Brother Russell's interpretation. We believe such to be in harmony with the Lord's will. Z. '18:51.

The Privilege and Power of Prayer

"And Jesus spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint."—Luke 18: 1-8.

TO the thoughtful, appreciative mind, one of the greatest privileges which the Word of God offers is that of personal audience and communion with the King of kings and Lord of lords. When we consider how great is our God, and how exalted His station, how wonderful is the condescension that thus regards our low estate! He it is whose glory covereth the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over the whole universe. He it is who is without beginning of days or end of years—"From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." He is the immortal, the Self-Existing One, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see."

The heavens declare His glory and the firmament showeth His handiwork. In all His vast universal domain there is nothing hidden from him, nor can He be wearied by its care. His wisdom, who can fathom? and His ways, who can find them out? or who hath been His counsellor? His mighty intellect grasps with ease all the interests of His wide dominion, from immensity to minutia. His eye never slumbers nor sleeps, nor can the smallest thing escape His notice, not even a sparrow's fall; and the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. It is His skill which clothes with life and beauty the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven.

And are not we, the creatures of His hand, "fearfully and wonderfully made," and the subjects, too, of His love and care?—"O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways; for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me; . . . even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." Psa. 139:1-12.

Fallen creatures though we be, from the noble estate in which we were created, God so loved our race, even while we were yet sinners, as to make provision at great cost for our redemption and restitution and subsequent eternal glory. And therefore it is—because He loves us—that through Christ He extends to us the gracious favor of coming to Him as children to a father. Wonderful is the condescension, wonderful the love and favor of our God!

Yet our God is a God to be revered. He is not one like ourselves, our equal, into whose presence we may come without that ceremony and decorum due to His glorious person and office. (Job. 9:1-35.) The court of heaven has regulations and ceremonies of respect and due deference which must be complied with by every man who would gain an audience with the King of kings; and it behooves us to inquire what those regulations are before we presume to address him. Here the Word of God gives explicit directions. Our Lord Jesus, the appointed "days-man" for whom Job so earnestly longed (Job 9:32, 33), said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. I am the way." (John 14:6.)

Then He gave us an illustration of the manner in which we should address Him, in what is known as the Lord's prayer. Matt. 6:9-13.

The illustration teaches (1) that we (believers in Christ) may consider ourselves as in God's estimation reinstated (through faith in Christ) to the original position of sons of God, and that we may therefore confidently address Him—"Our Father." (2) It indicates on our part worshipful adoration of the high and holy One, and profound reverence for the glorious character and attributes of our God —"Hallowed be thy name." (3) It expresses full sympathy with His revealed plan for a coming Kingdom of righteousness, which will be according to His will—"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." This shows the attitude of heart to be toward righteousness, and fully submitted to the Divine will and purpose, that God may work in it to will and to do His good pleasure. (4) It expresses in plain and simple language its dependence on God for daily needs, and the confidence of a child in the Father for the supply of those needs out of His abundant fulness —"Give us this day our daily bread." (5) It seeks forgiveness for trespasses, and recognizes also the obligation thus incurred to render the same to those trespassing against us—"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors": and (6) it seeks to be guarded against temptation and to be fortified by God's abounding grace against all the wiles of the Adversary—"And abandon us not to trial, but preserve us from evil."

Such are the principles which must ever characterize our attitude of mind and heart when we would avail ourselves of the privilege of addressing the throne of heavenly grace.

In brief, our prayers, to be acceptable to God, must express confident faith, loving esteem and reverence, full sympathy with the Divine Plan and submission to the Divine will, child-like dependence upon God, acknowledgment of sins and shortcomings and desire for forgiveness, with a forgiving disposition on our part toward others, and an humble craving for the Divine guidance and protection. These may not always all be expressed in words, but such must at least be the attitude of the soul.

Those who thus come to God are privileged always to have their interests considered at the throne of grace, and the welcome we shall always find there may be judged of by the cordial invitations to come often and tarry long. Well might we hesitate to avail ourselves of such privileges were we not thus assured, but having this assurance we may come with confidence to the throne of grace.

The Lord knew how necessary to our spiritual life would be this communion with Himself. Tempest-tossed and tried, how much we need our Father's care and the comfort and consolation which his presence and sympathy realized imparts. And have not all the meek and contrite in heart the promise not only of the occasional attentive hearing, but of the abiding presence of both the Father and the Son, our Lord Jesus? Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas—not Iscariot—saith unto him, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make **our abode with him**."—John 14:21-23.

The thought which this promise of the abiding presence of the Father and Son conveys to our minds is that their thought and care and interest will be constantly upon us, and that at any instant we may engage the special attention of either or both. The same idea is also conveyed by the words of the Apostle Peter (I. Peter 3:12)—"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." And we are urged to be "instant in prayer," to "pray always, and not to faint," to "pray without ceasing": for "Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him," and "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Yea, "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them."—Romans 12:12; Luke 18:1; I. Thes. 5:17; Psa. 103:13, 14, 11, 12, 17, 18.

We cannot come too often, then, to the throne of the heavenly grace, if we are of those who can claim the abiding presence of the Father and the Son—if we are of those who love him and keep his commandments and who recognize the Lord Jesus as the only way of access to the Father. And even **"if any man sin"—be overtaken in a fault—so that from his outward conduct he might be judged as not loving the Lord, yet, if he repent, let him remember that "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," who "is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins," "who also maketh intercession for us." "Who," then, "shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—I. John 2:1, 2; Rom. 8:33, 34.**

Wherefore, the Apostle urges, "Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Heb. 4:14-16.

With such urgent and loving invitations let no child of God hesitate to come to him often or to tarry long in communion and fellowship with him. It is our privilege to enter into our closets and shut the doors and pray to our Father which seeth in secret, who will reward us openly.—(Matt. 6:6.) And not only so, but he will go with us through all the business and hurry and commotion of the day; and at any instant in the midst of cares and perplexities we may turn our prayerful thoughts to Him for wisdom, for strength and Christian fortitude, or for comfort and consolation for ourselves or others. And though we hear no responding voice, if we are attentive to the course of His providence we will shortly see the shaping of events and circumstances for our good and the good of others in answer to such prayers. Beloved, have we not many a time proved this true?—in perplexities, in tribulations, in afflictions, in persecutions, in bereavements, in temptations and trials?

In coming to God we need have no fear that He is too busy with other matters of greater importance, or that He is weary of our coming to Him repeatedly with things of small importance. It was to assure us against this very thing that our Lord spoke the parable of the importunate widow who was heard and answered on account of her importunity. In so doing we evince both the earnestness of our desires and our faith that our prayers will be answered, if we faint not from lack of faith or zeal when the answer is delayed, as often it must necessarily be, since time is an important element in all God's work.

All night, until the break of day, Jacob wrestled in prayer, saying, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." Paul **thrice** besought the Lord until he was assured his grace would be sufficient for him. The Lord himself frequently spent **whole nights** in prayer, and he prayed earnestly and with many tears. (Luke 6:12; Matt. 14:23; Mark 6:46, 1:35; Luke 5:16; Heb. 5:7.) And the Apostle Paul says, "In everything, by prayer and supplication (earnest pleading) with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."—Phil. 4:6.

The Apostle himself acted on this principle when he urged, in his letter to the Romans, that the saints "strive together (Greek **agonize**) with me in prayers to God for me," that he might safely accomplish a certain work which seemed to be of the Spirit's leading.—Rom. 15:28-32.

"In every thing": **That signifies that our heavenly Father is deeply interested in everything that relates to us and ours.** What thing is too small for His notice who numbers even the very hairs of our heads? In today's household or business cares, then, we may have His loving sympathy and helpfulness. Do a mother's counsel and a father's wisdom seem inadequate to restrain and guide aright the wayward course of impetuous and over-confident youth, they may bring their cares and fears to the Lord; and, as the children cross the threshold to meet the world's temptations, His wisdom and providence may be invoked to so shape their circumstances and surroundings as to show them eventually the sure, safe way and the folly of pursuing any other.

Do business cares perplex and annoy? remember the Lord's caution, "Be not overcharged with the cares of this life," and the Apostle's warning, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and utter ruin; for the love of money is the root of all evil, which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many arrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." **And, remembering these things, come to the throne of the heavenly grace for wisdom and direction as to how you may so adjust your temporal affairs as not to be overcharged with the cares of this life.** It is right to be charged with them to the extent of diligence (Rom. 12:11) and the utilization of such diligence in the Lord's service; but it is the overplus, the corroding care, that interferes with peace of mind and communion with God, that is to be avoided.

Does poverty pinch and cause anxious thought? take that also to the Lord in prayer; and then, while diligently using the means at hand to provide things decent and honest, patiently and confidently wait and watch the indications of providence, assured that he who feeds the fowl of the air, "which neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns," and who "clothes the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven," is both able and willing to clothe and feed you and yours.

And so through all the list of earth's trials and cares, its wants and its woes, its bereavements and disappointments and calamities and distresses, its failures and shortcomings and sins and mistakes, we may take them all to the Lord in prayer and receive that strength and sympathy and consolation and help we so much need. Let us live in the presence of the Father and the Son who have promised to abide with us. It will sweeten our days and comfort our nights and ease our burdens and lighten our cares and brighten our hopes, and, in a word, it will lift us above the world into a higher and purer atmosphere. Such is the will of heaven concerning us. Let us appreciate and avail ourselves of the privilege.

By all the encouragements of precept and example, the Lord assures us that the fervent prayer of a righteous man (a justified and consecrated child of God) availeth much. (Jas. 5:16.) We are urged also to come in faith. Jesus said, "If ye have faith and doubt not . . . all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. 21:22.) As he was addressing his consecrated disciples, it must of course be understood that all their petitions would be subjected to Divine wisdom, and therefore the answers to their prayers, though always sure, might not always be in the way expected, but they would always be considered and answered in some way for their highest good.

What a blessed privilege, dear fellow-disciples of the Lord, is ours, to be "instant in prayer," to "pray always"—to lift up our hearts and minds to God at any time and in any place and to realize thus daily and hourly that the Father and our dear Lord Jesus continually abide with us. And then, when the active duties of the day have been performed under his eye and supervision, or at any time when the soul realizes its necessity, how precious is the privilege of entering into our closets and there alone with God unburdening our hearts.

While secret prayer is the blessed privilege of every child of God, and one without which his spiritual life cannot be sustained, it is also the privilege of Christians to unite their petitions at the throne of grace. This united prayer is specially commended by the Lord. (Matt. 18:19.) "Again

I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

With such promises as these, together with an experience of their fulfilment, who can doubt the love and favor of our God and of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ? Therefore let us be encouraged to pray always and not to faint when the answers seem to tarry long, for time is often required to work out the deep designs of an all-wise and loving Providence. Remember the words of the angel to Daniel. Daniel said, "While I was speaking and praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer," the answer came by the hand of an angel who said, "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. **At the beginning of thy supplications** the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee: for thou art greatly beloved."—Dan. 9:20-23.

On another occasion, when Daniel had mourned three weeks, fasting and praying, because of his inability to understand, the angel of the Lord came and said, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst **set thine heart** to understand, and **to chasten thyself before thy God,** thy words were heard, and I am come **for thy words.**"—Dan. 10:2, 3, 10-12.

Even so shall it ever be with all the beloved of the Lord. At the beginning of our supplications God begins to set in operation the influences and to shape the circumstances which are designed to work out the intended blessing for us—if we faint not, but continue instant in prayer, thereby evincing our continued earnestness of desire, and if we confess our sins, and set our hearts to understand, and chasten ourselves before him. **How many prayers are not heard or are hindered because the one who asks does not first purify himself of evil in his own heart? "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts"; i.e., you ask selfishly and without regard to the will of God. (Jas. 4:3.)** But to the chastened and sanctified comes the promise—**"Before they call (reading the desire of the heart even before it finds expression in words) I will answer (will begin so to shape events as to bring the answer soon or later); and while they are yet speaking I will hear." (Isa. 65: 23, 24.)** While this is in connection with a prophecy relating to the Lord's people in the Millennial Age, it is also true of all his faithful ones of this age.

Praise the Lord for all His loving kindness even to the least of His lowly children! Z. '10: 138-141.

Blessed are the Pure in Heart

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unfaithful is nothing pure: but both their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to have known God, but by their works they renounce Him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work worthless." "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life."—Titus 1:15, 16; Proverbs 4:23.

OUR first text is an extremely severe arraignment. The context seems to imply that the Apostle Paul was addressing some who were identified in a sense with the Cause of God, but whose doctrines and manner of life were in conflict with the Message of the Gospel. Whether he referred to unbelieving Jews or to those who had at least outwardly become followers of Christ we may not be sure. He was referring, at any rate, to those who professed to have known God, whether they knew Him through the Law or through the Gospel. The language seems to imply that these were fault-finders. They could find fault with everything—nobody could do anything just right, no doctrines were right. We have all met people of this character—people who see nothing pure, nothing good, anywhere, and who are denouncing others all the time.

The Apostle's statement is very strong, very forceful—"Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unfaithful is nothing pure." We understand him to mean by these words, not literally that the pure could find nothing that is impure, nor that the impure could find nothing pure, but that this is true in a general way. Those who are themselves pure can see righteousness in the Divine Law and in the Divine arrangement. They can see the true, pure hearts of God's sincere "little ones," in spite of the weaknesses of their fallen flesh. But the unfaithful become defiled, their consciences become perverted, so that they are unable to see anything or anybody in a proper light. They have permitted ill-natured thoughts to enter the mind and lodge there—suspicions, evil surmisings. . . .

Not only the **minds** of such become corrupted, seeing nothing pure, nothing good, nothing right, in others; but their **consciences** become defiled. At first the conscience of such would to some extent reprove them. But gradually, if they yield to this wrong heart attitude, their consciences become corrupt and hardened, so that they do not realize that they are prevaricating, misjudging, do not see how unjust, impure and blind they have become. "They profess to have known God," says the Apostle—knowing something in an intellectual way about His Plan and Word—"but by their works they deny Him." Their works are contrary to God's Word, which instructs that all should seek to do all the good they can, to see all the good they can, and to give generous judgment to others.

Fault-Finders, Accusers of the Brethren

These defiled ones deny God, renounce Him in their works—as St. Paul declares, they are "abominable, and disobedient" to God, walking contrary to His instructions. This is surely an abominable thing to do—after knowing the Lord to go in an opposite direction, and set His counsel at naught. Such are "to every good work worthless." They do not accomplish anything good, but the very opposite; yet they find fault with everybody else.

The Apostle is not saying here that such have necessarily become immoral and vile in that they have become delvers into all kinds of sin and vice. We are not to read into his words anything that is not there. But he does say that so far as any good work is concerned they will defile it, injure it. Better would it be that they keep away from the Lord's work entirely. They have allowed the bitter spirit to work in them until everything takes on the color of their own minds. They do not recognize to what an extent they are unjust, unrighteous, in their thoughts, their words, their conduct. They are injurious to every good work.

There are lessons of warning here for all of us, lest we should be led astray by the spirit of the Wicked One and become mere fault-finders, accusers of the brethren—not giving our time, our hands, our feet, our tongues, to doing good, to blessing and upbuilding the brethren, but rather to tearing down. In proportion as anyone does this, he is worthless, yea, worse than worthless, to the Lord and to His Cause.

Necessity for Guarding the Heart

"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." exhorts the Wise Man. The thought embodied in this exhortation is of the utmost importance. Truly these are words of wisdom! As the heart is perhaps the most important organ of the human body, so the word "heart" is here used in a figurative way to represent the centre of the affections of the human mind. The implication is that the heart needs keeping. There are many things to distract, to draw away, to lead astray. Not only the burden of business, but also the trend of the world in general and of our fallen flesh, tend to lead the heart away from righteousness, from the service of God, from purity, love and kindliness toward others.

The great Adversary also gives his assistance in attempts to thus mislead. The heart—the will, the affections—of every human being should be loyal to God and to righteousness. It was made so originally. As the magnetic needle turns to the pole, so the human heart should turn to the Lord. Anything to the contrary represents a sinful, distorted, perverted condition. But as a matter of fact, sin has become firmly implanted in the fallen human nature. During these long centuries of sin many people have striven to keep their hearts right with God. But after getting right, the MAJORITY fail to abide in that condition, to keep their heart in God's love, to keep it from going into wrong avenues, from getting into the wrong condition.

We often have difficulty in managing our bodies. There are appetites of the flesh that need constant watching. The tongue needs continual guarding. While we are to watch all these things carefully, yet the most important thing to watch is the heart; for all our evil tendencies have their mainspring there. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things."

We should be ever alert to see that our heart is kept pure, true. If we find impurities there, they should be prayerfully fought against and made right. We should keep our minds filled with that which is pure, worthy, Godlike.

As children of God we have learned that the only way to have our hearts right with our Father is through the Lord Jesus Christ. We have come to God through Christ and thus become His sons, receiving His Holy Spirit. Then we have a new influence, a new fountain, opened in the heart, which changes its current, which sweetens its outflow. Thenceforth we love righteousness and hate iniquity. If there is any variation from this at any time, we should see that we are promptly brought back into alignment with the Spirit of the Lord. We need to keep our heart continually under inspection, so that we may abide in close fellowship with the Father and with our Lord Jesus.

"For out of it (the heart) are the issues of life," declared Solomon. From this organ—the heart—the blood is pumped out to all parts of the body. The body is thus dependent upon the heart for its strength, its vitality, its very life. The body would be dead if the heart did not continually propel the blood through the system. So the issues of our bodily life are going forth from the heart every day, yea, every moment. It is either issuing little life or much life each day. So it is with the seat of our affections—so it is with our will. All who come in contact with us day by day are influenced for good or for evil by the spirit we manifest. It is highly important that all our conduct in life should be under the proper direction of a pure heart—one that is carefully watched and kept under inspection, so that today as we go forth, a good issue shall flow out from our heart to others. Thus the Lord will be pleased with us, and will count us "dear children." Thus shall our minds and consciences be kept undefiled.

The Final Issue—Life or Death

But there is a further sense, a vital sense, in which the issues of life are from the heart. God has informed us that though He sentenced our race to death, He has made provision for a future and an eternal life for all. And the conditions on which any may have this eternal life are set forth in the Scriptures. They tell us of certain things that must be done. To us who are called and accepted now it is important that we do all we are able to do, because by nature we have sin entrenched in our flesh. Like all of Adam's race, we are imperfect by nature through his fall; but the Lord informs us that if we become His children He will judge us by the heart—by our will, our intention, our desire, our efforts. Therefore when we are thinking of the glorious prize, we are to remember that the ultimate issue of this matter, the final decision, will depend altogether upon how we have fulfilled the conditions. It is as in a court, where a jury is sworn in to decide what the verdict shall be—whether in favor of one party or the other party. There will be an issue in our case, a decision, from which there will be no appeal.

The world will be on trial in the next Age, but the Church of Christ is on trial now—from the time they are begotten of the Holy Spirit. The new life is on trial. Our new heart is before the bar of Divine judgment. That new heart, then, needs keeping very carefully, since connected with it are the issues of eternal life or eternal death. Our hopes are not dependent on a perfect body; some may have a sick body, some may have a naturally amiable disposition, and others not. But our old bodies are reckoned dead from the moment we become New Creatures, and the New Creature is responsible for the control of the body to the best of its ability. These new hearts are to be kept loyal to God, to the principles of righteousness, truth, equity—loyal to our Covenant. If we fail properly to cultivate Christlike character, if we fail to keep in attunement with the Lord, then we shall never develop as New Creatures in Christ. And when the decisive testings come, we shall be found wanting.

The Lord has promised to give the blessing of glory, honor, immortality, joint-heirship with Jesus, to those who during the Gospel Age attain His character-likeness. And that character-likeness to God will demonstrate our loyalty to the principles of righteousness and to the Divine will. In the case of our Lord Jesus, He was willing, glad, to sacrifice everything to do the Father's will. So must it be with all who would be counted in with Christ. The issues, the results, of our life are here. God says to us, as followers of Christ, as His professed disciples, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose life that ye may live." Life is the blessing; death is the curse. All through the Bible this thought is maintained—that the gift of God is His blessing of eternal life, and that "the wages of sin" is the curse of death—not torment.

So to the Christian the issue of our life here on earth is life eternal, if we are faithful. Failing to gain the life eternal, we shall go into death—the Second Death; for if we are disloyal to the principles of righteousness and to the opportunities granted us in this trial for everlasting life that has come to us in the Gospel Age, there remains no future opportunity for us. These words apply to those who have really become children of God, who have tasted of the "heavenly gift." How important, then, to keep our HEARTS true, loyal, undefiled!

Final Issue of Life Differing in Degree

Amongst those in whose cases the issue will be everlasting life, there will be different ranks, as regards the degree of honor and blessing. As the Apostle pictures it, "For star differeth from star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead"—so it will be with those who have a part in the First Resurrection. Some will have a brighter glory in the Kingdom than others. We might say that there will be various issues—greater honor and less honor. As elsewhere shown in the Scriptures, there are two classes who will gain everlasting life on the spiritual plane of being. Many will be of the Great Company; some will be of the Little Flock, the Bride of Christ. Some will attain the highest plane, immortality; but more will get life similar to that of the angels, on a lower spirit plane.

So we see the wisdom of the Scriptural exhortation that the heart needs constant attention, because there are such important, vital issues in respect to it. And we see the wisdom in warning of the danger of permitting the mind and the conscience to become defiled and impure. Some might say, "I will be very careful about every word I speak." Very well so far. But to keep the tongue would not alone be sufficient to give eternal life; for the heart might be quite different from the tongue in some cases. One might be able to speak very smoothly, yet have a deceitful, impure heart. Again, one might say, "I will watch my body, and not sin with it." But that would not be enough. We must get down to the source. The Lord is looking at the desires, the intentions of the heart, in His people. This needs special watching, because the HEART is the battle-ground, so great are the issues from it—**life or death.** If life, then we desire that we may have the highest place that God is willing to grant us. And it is ours by meeting the conditions. Z. '15: 245-247.

Secret Faults and Presumptious Sins

"Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."—Psalm 19: 12-14.

THIS prophetic prayer represents well the heart attitude of the fully consecrated and earnest Christian. While realizing forgiveness of the "sins that are past through the forbearance of God," through the grace of God which was in Christ Jesus, which imputed our sins to him and his righteousness to us who believe in him, nevertheless the well-instructed soul realizes his faults, his shortcomings. These secret faults may be of two kinds: (1) They may be faults which were secret to ourselves at the time committed—slips, unintentional errors.

Of course, the earnest heart, desiring full fellowship with the Lord, will regret even his unintentional shortcomings and will strive and pray for Divine grace to get the victory over these. But besides these there are other secret faults, which are secret in the sense of being unknown to anyone but ourselves and the Lord—imperfections or faults of the mind before they take the outward form of actual and presumptuous sins.

All Christians of experience in the good way and in the battle against sin and self have learned that there can be no outward or presumptuous sins that have not first had their beginning in the secret faults of the mind. The sinful thought may be one of pride suggesting self-exaltation; it may be one of avarice suggesting unlawful acquisition of wealth; or it may be some other fleshly desire. The mere suggestion of the thought before our minds is not sin; it is merely the operation of our faculties, and of the influences which surround us, inquiring of our wills whether or not we will consent to such thoughts.

Many consent to thougths of evil who at the time would utterly repudiate any suggestion to commit evil deeds; but if the thought be **entertained** it is a secret fault, and the growing tendency would surely be toward the more outward and presumptuous sinful conduct, the tendency of which is always from bad to worse. To illustrate: Suppose the suggestion should come to our minds of a method by which we could advance our own interests of fame or honor or reputation by the undermining of the influence and reputation of another, how quickly the evil, selfish thought, if entertained, would lead to envy and possibly to hatred and strife. Almost surely it would lead to backbiting and slander and other works of the flesh and the devil. The beginnings are always small, and correspondingly much easier to deal with than in their developed form. Hence, the prophetic prayer, "Cleanse thou me from **secret faults**" and thus restrain or keep me back from presumptuous sins.

In the Epistle of James (1:14, 15) we read, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own desire and enticed. Then, when desire hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Here we have the same thought differently expressed. The temptation consists at first in the presentation to the mind of **suggestions** which are impure or unkind or unfaithful to obligations; but there is no sin, no fault as yet. The fault begins when we harbor the evil suggestions, begin to turn them over in our minds and to consider the attractions which they may have to offer. This is where **desire** (taking hold of the evil thing instead of resisting it) causes a beginning of the secret fault; and it is only a process of development, which in many instances, under favorable circumstances, may be **very rapid,** that sin, the presumptuous or outward acts of sin, results—for instance, bearing false witness against a neighbor, or slander, or other evil deeds. And the evil course having begun in the fostering of the evil suggestion, and having progressed to presumptuous sin, there is a great danger that the entire course of life will be ultimately affected thereby and bring the transgressor into that condition where he will commit the **great transgression**—wilful, deliberate, intentional sin—the wages of which is death, "Second Death."

It would appear, then, that every intelligent Christian would continually pray this inspired prayer, for cleansing from secret faults, that he might thus be restrained from presumptuous sins; and thus praying heartily, he would also watch against these beginnings of sin and keep his heart in a cleansed and pure condition, by going continually to the fountain of grace for help in every time of need. He who seeks to live a life of holiness and nearness to the Lord by merely guarding and striving against **outward** or presumptuous sins, and who neglects the beginning of sin in the secrets of his own mind, is attempting a right thing in a very foolish and unreasonable way. As well might we seek to avert smallpox by outward cleanliness, while permitting the germs of the disease to enter our systems. The bacteria or germs of presumptuous sins enter through the mind, and their antiseptics and bacteriacides of the truth and its spirit must meet them there and promptly kill the bacteria of sin before it germinates and leads us to such a condition of evil as will manifest itself in our outward conduct.

For instance, whenever the bacteria of **pride and self-importance** present themselves, let the antidote be promptly administered from the Lord's great medical laboratory for the healing of the soul. The proper dose to offset this species of bacteria is found in the words, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"; and, "Pride goeth before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."

If the thought presented to our minds be the bacteria of **envy,** then let us promptly apply the antidote which declares that envy is one of the works of the flesh and of the devil, and contrary to the Spirit of Christ, which by our covenant we have adopted as ours. And let us remember that envy is closely related to and apt to be followed by **malice, hatred and strife,** which, under some circumstances, mean murder, according to our Lord's interpretation.—I. John 3:15; Matt. 5:21,22.

If the bacteria which presents itself to our minds is **avarice,** with the suggestion of unjust methods for its gratification, let us promptly apply to it the medicine furnished in the Lord's Word, namely, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "For the love of money is the root of all evil, which some, coveting after, have erred from the truth and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

The more attention we give to this subject, the more we will be convinced, from our own personal experiences, of the truth of the Scriptural declarations respecting the beginnings of sin as **secret faults in the mind**; and the more we will appreciate the statement of the Word, "Keep thy heart (mind, affections) with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Prov. 4:23.

But we are not to wonder that God has so constituted us as to permit temptations to come to our minds, nor are we to pray that we may have no temptations; for if there were no such presentations, no such temptations, then there could be no victories on our part, no overcoming of sin and of the Wicked One. But we know that for this very reason we are now in the School of Christ; not that we shall there be shielded from all temptation, but that we may learn of the great Teacher how to meet the Tempter, and, by our Master's grace and help, to come off conquerors, victors in the strife against sin. The degree of our success in this conflict will depend largely upon the keenness of our faith and trust in the great Teacher. If we feel confident of His wisdom, we will follow closely his instructions and keep our hearts (minds) with all diligence. Faith in the Lord's wisdom and in His help in every time of need is necessary to us in order that we may be thoroughly obedient to Him; and hence it is written, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your **faith**;" that is, it will be by the exercise of faith and the obedience which flows therefrom that we shall be enabled to "come off conquerors and more than conquerors through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us."

Nor are we to seek Divine aid far in advance; as, for instance, to be kept throughout the year to come, or month to come, or week to come; rather we are to know that if we have made a covenant with the Lord and are His, that He is near us at all times in every trial, in every temptation; and that his assistance is ready for our use; if we will but accept it and act accordingly. Hence, our prayers should be for help **in the time of need,** as well as general prayers for the Lord's blessing and care for each day. In the moment of temptation the heart should lift itself to the great Master, in full assurance of faith, recognizing His love, His wisdom and His ability to help us, and His willingness to make all things work together for good to those who love Him. Asking for His assistance in such a time of need would surely draw to us the Lord's counsel and help and strength for righteousness, truth, purity and love; and thus we should be hourly victorious, daily victorious, and finally victorious.

The difficulty with many is that they are looking for some great battles, instead of averting the great battles by availing themselves of the Lord's provision, and keeping their minds cleansed from secret faults. The little battles, which are much more numerous, are the ones in which we gain the victories with their ultimate reward. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit (mind, will) than he that taketh a city."

Finally, the grand results of obedience to this counsel of the Lord, the grand attainment of those who have faithfully kept their hearts with diligence, is expressed in our text, and may well be the repeated earnest prayer of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus—"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer." Z. '10:118-119.

Victory, Not to the Strong

I Sam. 17:38-49.

"In the Lord put I my trust."—Psalm 11:1.

NOT long after David's anointing he became the hero of a most remarkable battle. The Philistines, residing on the seashore of Palestine, were the enemies of the Israelites from earliest times, and. . . . they held mastery over them at the time of Saul's coronation. Subsequently the victory gained over them by Saul was not complete, and they still occupied the city of Gath and considerable territory in the land given to Israel. In Gath dwelt Goliath, a descendant of the giants or Anakim, whose sight terrified the spies of Israel when they first essayed to enter the promised land. Goliath was a Philistine therefore, not by birth but by naturalization, as people of various nationalities become Americans. Goliath was in the prime of his manhood, proud of his size and strength. The Philistines, too, were vigilant and thought that with this champion and leader they might gain another victory over the Israelites. As a result they organized an army and marched northwesterly toward Jerusalem. King Saul, apprised of the fact, recruited an army to oppose them. The two armies faced each other on opposite slopes of the valley Elah. Evidently the opposing forces were fairly well matched and neither cared to make the attack. The Philistines, resorting to a method already known in history, proposed that a war be averted and that the issues between the two armies be decided by a personal battle. They sent forth Goliath as their champion and dared the Israelites to meet him. Similarly the Romans and the Albans, B.C., 667, settled the war by having three Roman Horatii and three Alban Curatii engage in mortal combat. The victory came to the Romans, inasmuch as one of their number survived. Similarly later, Sir Henry d'Bonham fought with Robert Bruce between the two contending armies in Scotland.

Goliath was a giant indeed. His six cubits and a span, if estimated on the 16-inch cubit, would represent 8 ft. 8 in., or counted by the 18-inch cubit would represent 9 ft. 9 in. A cubit is the length of the human arm from the elbow to the tip of the little finger; a span is half a cubit. Encyclopedia Brittanica refers to several giants: one a Scotchman, whose height was 8 ft. 3 in.; another an Arabian of 9 ft.; Charles Virne, an Irishman, measured 8 ft. 4 in.; Patrick Cotter, 8 ft. 7¾ in.; a Russian giant, 9 ft. 8 in. There is nothing, therefore, impossible or improbable in the story of Goliath. The giant was elaborately armored and practically invulnerable.

Israel and Israel's God Defied

At that time each nation apparently stood for a religious system and their prosperity and influence were largely credited to the favor of their god or gods. For forty days Goliath, clothed in his resplendent, gleaming armor, with a loud voice had shouted defiance to the men of Israel and incidentally to the God they worshiped, thus endeavoring to shame them and drive them to an unequal contest, of which he felt sure he would be the victor. We cannot wonder that no Israelite was found foolhardy enough to undertake a battle with the giant on the terms and conditions then prevalent—a battle with sword and spear and javelin; ordinarily anyone would have been but a child at the mercy of the foe.

Jesse at Bethlehem was only about twenty miles distant from the camp of the army, and on the fortieth day he sent David with greetings and delicacies for three of his elder sons who were in Saul's army and to bring back word of the progress of events. The ruddy youth, the shepherd boy David, with little knowledge of warfare, was surprised to see the challenger and that the God of Israel was thus defied by the heathen. By nature and by experience in the keeping of his sheep and the defending of them from wild animals David was courageous, fearless. Besides, he evidently was well born as respects reverence for God and faith in him. It was Goliath's defiance of the God of Israel that seemed to strike him most forcibly. He made inquiries as to why none of the Israelites in the name of the Lord had undertaken the battle, implying his own willingness to do so. Many of those with whom he communed on the subject were evidently impressed with his faith and ardor. But his own brethren were less appreciative, and sneered. However, the matter spread from mouth to mouth until it reached the ear of King Saul, who sent for David.

Although the king for some years had been out of favor with the Lord, he nevertheless had good reason for believing in divine power, as it had already been manifested in his own experiences. He evidently queried if this proposition of David, his only hope, might not be of the Lord. David explained briefly his own prowess in connection with the slaying of a lion and at another time a bear in defence of his flocks. The king admired the youth, his courage and his faith, and consented that he should undertake the battle with the giant, hoping doubtless that God would favor His people with a victory even against such odds of physical strength. King Saul had the best armor, of course, amongst all the Israelites, and he proposed that David use it. But when the latter tried it on he felt himself constrained and declared that he would have less confidence in it than out of it. He went forth to meet Goliath in his own way, armed merely with a shepherd's oak stick and with a sling and a shepherd's bag. Selecting five smooth stones for use in his sling he approached the giant as the latter came forth as usual to dare the Israelites.

The story of the conflict is quickly told. The Philistine was indignant that he should be asked to fight with a boy unarmored, and he cursed David in the name of his gods, saying, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and unto the beasts of the field." David's reply was characteristic—full of that faith in God which marks his entire history from first to last, and on account of which the Lord speaks of him as a man after his own heart. He said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with sword and spear and with javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee and take thy head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the hosts of the Philistines this day to the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hands." Thus the issue was seen by both Philistines and Israelites to be as between the Lord, his people and their enemies. Hastening forward David threw his first stone, which struck the giant in the forehead and caused him to fall senseless. Directly David finished the conflict with Goliath's own sword, beheading him while the Israelites, their faith reviving, attacked the Philistines, whose courage fled.

It is supposed that Goliath wore a helmet with moveable front common in those days, and that he laughed at the youth who was coming against him, and in so doing threw back his head, allowing the vizor of his helmet to open, exposing his forehead. Others suppose that he reached for his javelin, which he carried in a sheath between his shoulders, and in reaching back for the javelin the helmet opened at the opportune moment and admitted David's stone. However the matter happened we cannot doubt that David was quite correct in his understanding of the matter; that divine providence supervised the entire transaction and brought the victory. Nor was such markmanship with the sling an unusual thing in those times, for we read how on another occasion 700 men of the tribe of Benjamin threw stones "to a hair's breadth."—Judges 20:16.

The Christian's Adversary and Conflict

What lesson can the "New Creation" of the present time draw from this story of olden time? David, whose name signifies beloved, in many respects typified the Christ, Head and Body. His experiences with Goliath illustrate well first of all our Lord's conflict with the Adversary during the forty days' temptation in the wilderness. Our Lord's victory over Satan on that occasion, his loyalty to the Father and the work entrusted to him, his own self-sacrifice, meant the victory for all the world of mankind desirous of being in harmony with God and his arrangement. Did he not declare to us, "Fear not, I have overcome the world"? In overcoming Satan, the prince of this world, he was gaining at the same time a victory over all the hosts of evil and servants of sin. He stood faithful to God and to his covenant relationship and responsibility and hurled at the Adversary the pebble of truth—"It is written." As Goliath fell before David, so Satan was vanquished by our Lord, who declares, "I beheld Satan fall from heaven," and declared also as a result of his victory, "All power is given me in heaven and in earth," and sent forth His disciples in His name to similarly battle in His strength and to come off conqueror and to ultimately share with Him in His Kingdom, which is to "bless all the families of the earth."

It is written of the Lord's faithful disciples, who shall constitute the Church of glory, that they must walk in his steps as he set the example. This means to them as to him a warfare against sin, its great representative and leader Satan, and all the hosts of deceived humanity who are on his side. Does not the Apostle intimate this when he says, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in influential positions? (Eph. 6:12.) Our enemy is a giant in whose presence we are feeble indeed. The Apostle calls him a wily foe and our Lord taught us to pray the Father, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Very evidently, then, we need divine assistance in our unequal contest, as did David in his.

"Not By Might, Nor By Power, But By My Spirit"

All those whom the Lord accepts to probationary membership in the Body of Christ, have been previously anointed and come under the divine power and guidance. They have had their experiences, too, in struggling against evil in general, even as David had his experience with the lion and the bear, and those experiences in the Lord's providence were merely preparations for the great testing, the great conflict with the Adversary and his various devices for our injury. The natural thought in connection with such a contest is to put on armor simliar to that of our opponent, as Saul offered his armor to

David. It is for each of the Lord's people, however, to learn that victory cannot be won along worldly lines. We cannot fight evil with evil, wrong with wrong, boasting with boasting and slander with slander, hatred with hatred, etc. If we undertake so to do we shall surely lose in the battle. Our course, like that of David, must be full reliance upon the Lord and the use of the sling and pebble of truth. If we cannot conquer along these lines we cannot conquer at all. Who is sufficient for these things?—for such an unequal contest with the prince of darkness and all the hosts of sin? Surely the one who would have confidence in himself would be unwise; hence, as the Apostle says, we place our confidence in God; if we are loyal to Him victory will be ours, if we are careless or unfaithful we shall not be of the David class—not be members of the glorious Body of Christ, in which event we shall never reign with him, even as David, who received the anointing, would never have reached the throne, if he had fought the giant with Saul's armor.

"Works of the Flesh and of the Devil"

The imperfections of the flesh with which we all must contend are indeed part of the works of the devil, for did he not in Eden accomplish the fall of our first parents, and thus the fall of our entire race into the sin and death condition against which we struggle in vain, except as we are rescued by him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood? But in addition to these inherited weaknesses of the flesh we must contend against the active works of the Adversary—not only his temptations to ourselves but his intrigues through mankind in general, for he is indeed the "one who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience," and they are much more numerous than the children of obedience. Hence our assailants are manifold, and in many of their assaults upon us they have at least the sympathy of our fallen flesh, however antagonistic our hearts, our minds as New Creatures in Christ.

The Apostle helps us to get a view of the great enemy and the influences he is bringing to bear against us on every hand and every day. He sums them up as follows: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these,—adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders (he that hateth his brother is a murderer), drunkenness (intoxication literally or symbolically with the spirit of the world, Babylon), revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."—Gal. 5: 19-21.

"We Wrestle Not With Flesh and Blood"

Behold in this list the Goliath with whom we must contend! The special weakness of one may not be the special weakness of another, but the list which the Apostle has here provided is sure to include the weak points of the flesh of every one of the Lord's consecrated people, every one who is a member of the David class, of the Beloved One, of the Christ. All who are anointed for the coming glory as kings and priests, as New Creatures, have a Goliath in their own flesh to be fought, and fought to a finish! Either the old nature must die or the new one must die. Exhorting along this line the Apostle says, Mortify, therefore, your members that are upon the earth—the downward tendency of your flesh. It must be killed, it must be beheaded, as was Goliath; but there can be no complete putting away of the earthly mind, the fleshly mind and its influence until first we in the name of the Lord have conquered by smiting it with the pebble of truth.

As we look over the above list of the works of the flesh and the devil, we find that they are all rooted in selfishness; and as we look to the Lord as our pattern as New Creatures we find that all the fruits and graces of the Spirit are reversely centered in love. In proportion, therefore, as the New Creature lives, grows and thrives in love, the old creature, the works of the flesh, will perish with its selfishness.

We might be inclined to reason amiss on the subject and to say with the Apostle, Having begun in the spirit, are you seeking to be perfect in the flesh? We might say, Surely all who have been begotten of the holy Spirit and who have reckoned themselves dead indeed to the flesh and its inclinations and desires—none of these, surely, could ever be influenced again to come under the Adversary's power and become a partaker of his spirit and participate in his works!

This is a wrong thought! It is possible for some of the Lord's true children to be thus overcome. True, if thoroughly overcome by the spirit of selfishness it would mean the death of the New Creature, and this would mean the Second Death. The path from the new nature into the Second Death is not necessarily a very long one, but we have no reason to believe that it could be taken at merely one step. We remember that the new nature up to the present time, up to the time of our resurrection change, is but the new mind, the new will, the new disposition in harmony with the Lord, his righteousness, his love. We are to remember, as the Apostle suggests, that we have this new nature in an earthen vessel and that the earthen vessel has practically all of its original blemishes and fallen tendencies still as powerful as ever except as the new mind has these under its mastery and control; but if that mastery or control should be released even for a moment the result would be the awakening, the reviving of the old nature. And we may be sure that our Adversary is alert and fully realizes the situation and will do all in his power to put us off guard, even to the extent of endeavoring to make white appear black and black appear white before our judgment. The Lord very graciously shields us from temptations more than we are able to bear. Hence it is possible for us at all times to be overcome, not only in the infancy of our new nature, but also in its further development; but the testings permitted grow more severe, more crucial, as we near our spiritual graduation time. Nor can we object to this; it is exactly what we should expect.

The Apostle, following this line of thought, declares, "I keep my body under"; and again he says, "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth"—your earthly ambitions, will, etc., everything in yourself that would tend toward envy, hatred, anger and strife—put these to death. Allow the new nature to have full sway and control in every thought, in every word, in every deed. And watch to this end; watch your thoughts, watch your words, watch your conduct. Many can watch their conduct who find it difficult to scrutinize and properly weigh their thoughts and their words. Truly the Apostle intimates that out of the heart proceeds envy, bitterness, evil speaking, backbiting and strife: unless they are in the heart the mouth cannot utter them, for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh.

"The Tongue Is a Fire and a World of Iniquity"

Alas, yes! our words do judge us; as the Master declared, "By thy words thou shall be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." No wonder the prophet said, "I will set a guard upon my lips lest I sin with my mouth." The setting of a guard evidently means that we will practice great deliberation, great care in respect to everything that we say; that we should speak evil against none. Our evil speaking is not at all necessary to the Lord and to his cause; he is perfectly able to accomplish all of his purposes without our violating a single one of his wise arrangements on our behalf. If he is not wise enough to bring order out of confusion, surely we are not sufficiently wise, and it would be very presumptuous on our part to interfere with the Lord and His affairs, except strictly along the lines of the instruction of His Word. Let this be our authority: when He instructs us to speak let us speak, when He instructs us to be silent let us be silent. No other course is a safe one.

The Apostle declares the "tongue setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of Gehenna." (James 3:6.) In other words, that which fires the tongue to evil is a spark which belongs to the Second Death, for all anger, malice, envy, hatred, strife, evil speaking, back-biting, are all works of the flesh and of the devil, which are tending toward the Second Death. As the Apostle says in enumerating these, "They that do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:21.) They that do such things, if they continue in that evil course, will not only fail to get a share in the Kingdom, but fail to get a share in the Great Company, and will receive their portion in Gehenna—the Second Death. This is no exaggerated teaching on our part; it is the clear testimony of St. Peter and St. James. And not only is this the rule of this Gospel Age and the Church which is now on special trial, but the same will be the rule during the millennium; those who will not come into harmony with the law of love, which is the opposite of all these works of the devil, will be counted as servants of sin and of Satan and will have their portion in the lake of fire, which is the Second Death. Rev. 20:14.

When the Apostle speaks of the tongue as setting on fire the course of nature, we believe that he is expressing a truth in full harmony with that set forth by the Apostle Peter, when he tells us that the symbolic heavens and the symbolic earth shall surely be on fire. The tongue, that little member, will thus set on fire the course of nature and eventually bring in the great period of awful anarchy with which present institutions will go down, preparing the way for the Kingdom of the Lord under the whole heavens. Whoever has an ear to hear can already perceive that bitter tongues are moving rapidly in the direction of the igniting of the great fire which the Apostle delineates. Passions are being aroused in Church, State, financial and political circles. Selfishness is more and more getting into command until by and by, as the Scriptures declare, there will be no peace to him that goes out or comes in, but every man's hand will be against his neighbor.

If thus the tongue is to set on fire the course of nature in the nominal Church and in the social world, shall we suppose that the Church of the Living God, whose names are written in heaven, will be exempted from such trials, and shall we suppose that the tests will be less crucial with them than with the world? No, verily! We must expect that judgment will begin at the house of God and extend to the nominal house and to the world. **It behooves each one to be awake on this subject of the unruly member, to bring ours into absolute submission to the will of the Lord; that we shall speak only those things which are edifying; that we shall speak evil of no man; that our tongues wherewith we bless and praise God shall be used only in blessing and assisting and uplifting and strengthening the Lord's cause.**

But since it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh we must keep our hearts with all diligence, we must remember their natural deceitfulness; we must be on guard lest they should deceive us now into thinking that evil is good, and that in promoting evil in speaking and slandering one another we are promoting good. This is a part of the artifice of the Adversary, and, as the Apostle says, "We are not ignorant of his devices." Let us, then, be more than ever on guard to scrutinize our motives, and not only so, but after finding good motives, let us scrutinize our methods and square them all with the Word of the Lord, especially remembering his instructions that we shall love one another as he has loved us—to the extent of laying down our lives for each other—and that we shall be obedient to him to the extent that we shall give heed to His Word, not forgetting His methods of procedure, as outlined to us in His own words. —Matthew 18:15-17. Z '08:232-235.

Year Text

Jeremiah 46:14-16.

Stand Fast and prepare thee; for the sword (Heb. 4:12) shall devour round about thee.

15. Why are thy valiant men swept away? they stood not, because the Lord did drive them.

16. He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they said, Arise, and let us go again to our own people (Psa. 45:10), and tothe land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

RESISTING THE PROUD, GIVING GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

We believe that this is a principle that holds good always. Now, today, those who are seeking to honor God He will be sure to honor. Those who are seeking merely self-honor may obtain some of that honor, may glorify themselves to a certain extent; but it will not be the Lord that will glorify them. In the service of His Cause, His Truth, they will not be honored by Him. "The Lord resisteth the proud, and giveth grace (favor) to the humble." The way to honor God is to seek to know His will and to do it from sincere hearts, to have God first in all our affairs, to show forth His praises. **We are to never mind ourselves, our own honor.** We are to serve in accordance with the principles which the Lord is promoting. To seek the glory of God is the proper course for us who are His children and whom He has blessed. Z. '15:173.

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The friendship of David and Jonathan seems also to be suggestive of that beautiful accord which shall exist between the glorified Church and the earthly princes who shall be next to them in the Kingdom of God. There will not be a note of discord or rivalry or jealousy between them; for each will be delighted to fill his honored place in the wonderful plan of God, and will love the other as his own soul. Though the Gospel Church will receive the first place of favor offered in the Abrahamic covenant, and the ancient worthies will find themselves **next** in honor, they will rejoice to have it so, because divine wisdom and love have so planned it.

And as David remembered his covenant with Jonathan not to cut off his kindness from the house of Jonathan (2 Sam. 9:1-13), so the glorified Church will remember its covenant to bless the ancient worthies first, and then all the families of the earth who will then be under their jurisdiction. Their loving ministry through the law and prophecies and their noble examples of godly life and character, which have been so helpful to us, while Satan was hotly pursuing us ("as a roaring lion," 1 Pet. 5:8), as Saul pursued David, shall be held in "everlasting remembrance." Z. '95:291.

◆

That the Church in this sifting and proving time will be individually tested as to character, as well as to faith, is certain. The prospective heirs of the Kingdom must, like their Lord, be tried and tested in every point; and it behooves everyone, therefore, to watch and pray, lest he enter into temptation, and diligently to cultivate such a character as will stand every test applied to it. **But in the hour of testing let none mistake love of peace for love of righteousness.** Let us see to it that the same mind dwells in us that is in Christ, our pattern. So shall we be children of God, beloved and owned of Him. Z. '95:290.

IN THE CLOUDY DAY

It is true, nevertheless, that our Christian experience is not always of a kind calculated to produce an exuberance of spirit: it is doubtless to our advantage that sometimes there are dark hours such as our dear Redeemer experienced when he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Such experiences no doubt draw us nearer to the fountain of comfort, of joy and peace, and are blessings in disguise, and amongst the "all things" which are working together for our good. But even in the very midst of trials and difficulties, and while cast down so that the songs do not abound, we may nevertheless in all conditions and at all times realize God's love and care and so firmly hold on to the Lord, with the hand of faith, that we would in the darkest moments be able to realize the joy of our Master's sympathy and love and help, and thus have the joy which no disaster of the present time can interrupt. Z. '97:306.

◆

The Apostle's counsel is to avoid foolish questions and strife about words to no profit, to shun profane and vain babblings which increase only unto more ungodliness, which savor more of bombast and self-exaltation than of truth and godliness. Z. '94:138.

◆

"The Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are." No outside, unconsecrated stones are wanted in this Temple. Let the world build its own. God Himself is the Builder of the Church, which is the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Z. '11:380.

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We have every reason to believe that in some measure divine providence extends even beyond the New Creation to those whose lives and interests are closely linked to theirs. F:646.

◆

We have various thorns in the flesh, various difficulties, various trials; some of them mental; some physical; some well understood by others; others unknown except by ourselves. What a comfort it has been to many to have the Lord's assurance that what trials and difficulties he does not remove from us, he permits for wise and loving purposes. These, he assures us, will all work together for our good. Of these he declares, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Taking this, the Apostle's viewpoint, dear fellow-servants of the cross, let us take all of our experiences in good faith, realizing the truth of these words, that our weaknesses, our imperfections, our frailties, so far from working injury to us, will, under the Lord's supervising care, enable him to supplement the more our willing endeavors with his strength. Z. '09:215.

The Great Army of the Lord

IN the coming Battle of Armageddon God's side of that battle will be the people's side. D. XIV Foreword.

As to the exact form in which this closing struggle should be expected, we can only make suggestions, based largely upon the symbolic views of the same, given in Revelation. We anticipate the gradual formation throughout the world of two great parties—**from both of which the faithful, overcoming saints will stand separate.** These two great parties will be composed on the one side of Socialists, Freethinkers, Infidels, discontents, and true liberty-lovers whose eyes are beginning to open to the facts of the case as they relate both to political and religious mis-government and depotism: on the other side will be gradually associated the opponents of human liberty and equality—Emperors, Kings, Aristocrats; and in close sympathy with these will stand the counterfeit of God's Kingdom, Antichrist, supporting and being supported by earth's civil despots. B. 360.

The Lord, by His overruling providence, will take a general charge of this great army of discontents—patriots, reformers, socialists, moralists, anarchists, ignorants and hopeless—and use their hopes, fears, follies and selfishness, according to His divine wisdom, to work out His own grand purposes in the overthrow of present institutions, and for the preparation of man for the Kingdom of Righteousness. For this reason only it is termed "The Lord's great army." None of His saints,—none who are led by the spirit of God as sons of God are to have anything to do with that part of the "battle." D. 550.

God will gradually bring the Time of Trouble upon Christendom like a snare, as a movement toward liberty for the people, through a multitude of progressives, radicals, revolutionists and anarchists: and these shall ensnare her unknowingly in the great tribulation, and bring her up out of favor with the people. G. 514.

It was in the fall of 1916—a year and seven months before the city was to be smitten in the spring of 1918—that the forces of laborism, revolution and anarchy, began to assert themselves against the established order of things in Christendom—the siege of the city began. G. 481.

Some interesting developments in connection with the setting up of the Kingdom may occur in 1920, six years after the great Time of Trouble began. It would not be strange if this were so, when we recall that after forty years' wandering in the wilderness the Israelites came into possession of the land of Canaan after a further six years. As these matters are still future we can but wait to see. We anticipate that the "earthquake" will occur early in 1918, and that the "fire" will come in the fall of 1920. G. 178, 179.

Rev. 6 : 15. And the kings of the earth.—The aristocracy.

And the great men.—The clergy. (Rev. 18 : 23, comment). Rendered "nobles" in Mark 6 : 21. See Job. 12 : 2; Isa. 9 : 15.

(And the rich men) and the chief captains, AND THE RICH MEN.—The high military officers. Rendered "high captains" in Mark 6 : 21. The magnates and financiers.

And the mighty men.—The labor organizers.

And every bondman.—Member of a labor organization.

And every free man.—Other worker (if not a bond-slave of Christ).

Hid themselves in the dens.—See Isa. 2 : 19-21.

And in the rocks of the mountains.—"As the trouble increases, men will seek, but in vain, for protection in the great rocks and fortresses of society (Free Masonry, Odd Fellowship, and Trades Unions, Guilds, Trusts, and all societies secular and ecclesiastical), and in the mountains (governments) of earth."—B 139. Jer. 3 : 23; Hos. 10 : 8.

6 : 16. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us.—"The Greek word **epi**, here used, is generally translated **on**, but has also the significance of **over** (Rev., 5 : 10) and **about**, and is so translated many times in the common version. The thought is that of protection, not of destruction. The common view of this passage, that it teaches that wicked men will get faith enough to pray for literal mountains to fall, is absurd. The real fulfilment is already beginning: the great, the rich, and no less the poor, are seeking to the mountains and rocks and caves for shelter from the darkening storm of trouble which all see is gathering." G. 121, 122.

As we come closer and closer to the great crisis of this "evil day" it will doubtless be manifest to those who view the situation from the standpoint of "the sure word of prophecy," that, even if there be cases where principle is not involved, it will be the part of wisdom to withdraw from the various social and financial bondages which must inevitably succumb to the ravages of world-wide revolution and anarchy. D. 45.

It is evidently not the saints who are to constitute the Lord's great army, referred to by the prophets, for the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world: nor are the weapons of their warfare sufficient to this end. Their weapons are indeed mighty, as the Apostle says, among those who are influenced by them. Among the true people of God, who diligently apply their hearts unto instruction, His word is sharper than any two-edged sword, truly "casting down imaginations (human reasonings) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10 : 4, 5); but not so do the weapons of this warfare operate upon the world. The army of the saints is, moreover, not a "great army," but a "little flock," as our Lord Himself designated it.—Compare Luke 12 : 32; Joel 2 : 11. D. 543.

Also it is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED that the 35th Chapter of Ezekiel, in Vol. G, be carefully studied that the reader may be assisted to more fully understand what Bro. Russell taught about THE GREAT ARMY OF THE LORD.

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

GENERAL CONVENTION of Standfast Bible Students at Bellingham, Wash., January 30th, 31st and February 1st, 1920. For information write Brother B. A. Ish, Box 21, Bellingham, Wash. Further announcements will appear in Old Corn Gems No. 25.